GAMBIT

Modern Chess Planning

Efstratios Grivas

A practical training course in logical chess

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Symbols

+	check
++	double check
#	checkmate
!!	brilliant move
!	good move
!?	interesting move
?!	dubious move
?	bad move
??	blunder
+–	White is winning
±	White is much better
⩲	White is slightly better
=	equal position
∞	unclear position
⩱	Black is slightly better
∓	Black is much better
–+	Black is winning
Ch	championship
1-0	the game ends in a win for White
½-½	the game ends in a draw
0-1	the game ends in a win for Black
(*n*)	*n*th match game
(D)	see next diagram

The mysterious symbol ⩲

What does this little chess sign (⩲ or ⩱) actually mean? Its implications are confusing for a lot of chess-players, who either are too happy to enjoy it or too disappointed to face it! The truth is, as nearly always, somewhere in the middle: ⩲ is usually the normal consequence of a mutually well played opening. Naturally, this evaluation can be encountered in every phase of the game. Its obvious meaning is that the player that has this symbol assigned to him enjoys slightly better chances in the ensuing battle. His advantage is not in itself enough to guarantee victory, but he can afford the luxury of making an inaccuracy, in which case the position is usually equalized. It also means that, if the defending side does not commit any mistakes (slight or serious) then the natural outcome of the game will be a draw. Should, however, the defending side fail to act appropriately and proceed with accuracy, then the evaluation of the position will move to ±, meaning that the goal of victory for the superior side is now closer.

So, that's the secret of this 'mysterious' symbol: the 'right' to an inaccuracy! Maybe this sounds a little bit paradoxical, but it is much closer to the truth than any other description. Try to understand it and benefit as much as possible from its almost mythical significance in the world of modern chess practice.

Introduction

This book offers training on a vital subject, the choice of the best available plan.

As is commonly accepted in the chess world, a correct evaluation of the position, a strong plan and an accurate execution are the three important factors that separate 'the man from the boy'. In a way, efficient training on the three above-mentioned concepts can help a chess-player mature and lead him to new successful paths.

With this book I have sought to provide a training guide that will be helpful mostly to players in the 1500-2200 range – corresponding to lower club level up to those with aspirations for a FIDE title. Of course, the book may well also be useful for players weaker than 1500, or for those stronger than 2200, but this is a decision these players should make for themselves!

Before we go on, I have to say that I do not really believe in ratings. I also find the entire paranoia that revolves around them pretty much irrelevant. The rating system is supposed to reflect a player's results during a specific period of time in the past. This has nothing to do with his future development and thus we should consider the rating scale as a tool of statistical value. What really counts is winning important tournaments and championships. Only this can guarantee a chess-player his place in chess history. People remember great chess-players not because of their ratings, but because of their outstanding achievements.

But anyway, this is a book for training purposes and assessing the reader's approximate chess strength. It is essential to determine this strength, for knowing exactly where we stand and what we need to improve, in other words knowing ourselves, is a very serious step towards improving our chess skills.

The reader may wonder why most of the games in this book (50 out of 75) are mine. Well, this is a good question and has a good answer: I have been a 'part' of these games, as I played them, and I can present my thoughts during and after them. This is an important factor. It would be perhaps easier for an author to present well-known games played by top GMs. However, although that has the benefit of providing welcome variety, it is hard in such cases to know exactly what was going through the minds of the players, unless they have provided unusually revealing annotations. I have therefore opted for a combined approach: 50 examples from my practice and 25 of other, outstanding players.

How this Book Works

In this book there are 75 tests, each based around a game. The first 50 games are mine and are presented in chronological order, so the reader may detect a progression in my play. Starting from 1984 (the year in which I achieved the IM title), there is at least one game from each year, until the present day. The other 25 games come from my personal archives and are games that I really love and respect.

In each of these tests, the starting point is the first diagram. There is a judgement (evaluation) of the diagrammed position, which helps the reader to understand some important facts about the position itself. A presentation of three possible plans follows. Then the reader must judge which is the most valuable plan. The best plan receives a maximum of 20 or 30 points. The other, less good, plans normally receive some points, depending on their actual value. Some of the plans receive no points at all; they are just bad!

After finishing work on the 75 tests, the reader must take a good look at the solutions, where he can find the answers to each. In the solutions, the game is analysed until its end, so the reader can

better understand why the rewarded plan was the best in the position and how it worked out. In most cases, not much attention is paid to the inferior plans, as I think it is more important to examine and understand how the best plan suited the position. There are a few examples where the best available plan was overlooked, but still these are exceptions and the games were nevertheless quite interesting.

By this point, you will have received some very good training. But then, it will do no harm to measure your strength on this subject. The starting point will be 1000 rating points, to which you should add the total number of points awarded to your choices in the tests. The maximum is 1750 points (50x20 and 25x30), so a perfectly-scoring reader could reach up to 2750 rating points, a top-level GM's strength.

As one might notice from the table on page 141, expectations are a little higher than usual for the categories listed, as in this book the judgement of the position is given by the author beforehand, and this is a great help for the reader. A correct evaluation of any position is one of the most significant factors in chess, but that could be the subject for another book.

It must be mentioned that, before the games/tests, there is a short chapter, explaining why plans are so important in a chess game.

It is now time for you to train on that important chess concept, the plan. Have fun and train well!

Contributors and Helpers

Significant help in the preparation of this book was provided by Sotiris Logothetis, Vasilios Andronis, Efstathios Gazis and Thomas Michos. The tests were also kindly 'tested' by GM Stylianos Halkias, IM Anna-Maria Botsari, IM Nikolaos Gavrilakis, IM Robert Zysk, FM Antonios Vragoteris and Panayotis Drepaniotis. I would like to thank them all for their valuable help.

Bibliography

There is not much of a bibliography, as the 50 games come from my personal experience and practice. For the other 25 I used some valuable help from sources such as *New In Chess* and *Informator.*

Dedication

This book is dedicated to one of my most significant trainers, IM Dr Nikolay Minev (USA, ex-Bulgarian, born 8th January 1931). I would like to thank him for the way he taught me to understand and practice chess.

Efstratios Grivas
Athens, February 2007

Planning

The most important element in modern chess practice is probably correct planning. The plan is associated with judgement and execution; all three are valuable concepts that cannot be separated and which, most of the time, determine the fate of our positions.

Nowadays, chess games between good players are full of small plans of different types and ideas, based on purely strategic and tactical motifs. The one who judges, plans and executes better than the opponent earns the right to win the game.

A closer examination of games played between strong players will prove that there is some harmony among their moves, some central idea that guides the movements of their forces. This is what we call a **plan**. A good chess-player refuses to act without any plan, even if this plan sometimes turns out to be mistaken in the long run.

First of all, it is important to identify the most important strategic and tactical elements of each particular position. According to the needs of that certain position, we should create our plan and stick to it. Games where only one plan is used are rarely seen these days. We are usually obliged to create several small plans, which of course are just parts of our main design: winning!

Many weak players are unable to construct a plan. This has nothing to do with intelligence, but just with basic education. Nowadays, with so many books, electronic help and trainers available, anything can be learned and, by constant practice, it can be understood and assimilated. Without basic education and knowledge we can't go very far. So, the first step is to understand the basic strategic and tactical elements that govern our royal game. Then, it is time to learn about judgement, planning and execution. If we do all of the above, we are ready to climb the chess Olympus.

Plans are necessary and can be found in every phase of a chess game. From the early opening until the late endgame, chess-players create the necessary plans, derived from such varied factors as the occupation of an important square to a violent attack. More usual are the plans we draw right after the end of the opening phase, but this is of course not the rule. Nowadays, with opening theory having gone very far, the choice of a certain opening very much depends on a plan we would like to use.

Some general advice could be presented to the reader as follows:

1. Notice and understand the main merits and disadvantages of each side (judgement).
2. Notice the immediate threats of both sides, but especially of your opponent!
3. Determine what is (are) the main, most significant target(s) and how the plan should be executed.
4. Examine what will be the opponent's reaction to your plan.
5. Examine what your opponent's possible main plan is (can be) and how you should react to it.
6. If you can choose among two or more good plans, opt for the one that you think can bring more benefits.
7. Follow your plan. Do not change it without a really good reason.

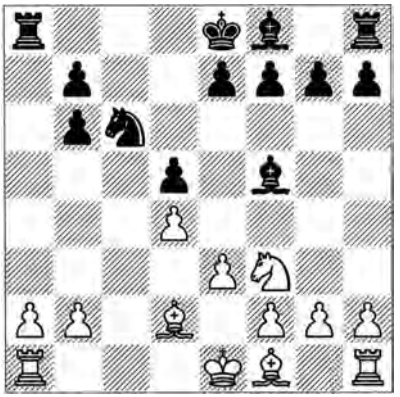
An important example of judgement, planning and execution follows.

When I was quite young (many years ago!) I considered myself lucky to read a two-volume chess encyclopedia, written by Greek IM Triantafyllos Siaperas. In one of these volumes I came across the following position (*see diagram on next page*):

10...♗d7!

A very deep move indeed, typical of the chess understanding of the great Cuban. He did not continue with the natural developing move 10...e6, but instead preferred to withdraw his f5-bishop

B



Janowski – Capablanca
New York 1916

back to d7. He preferred to place his bishop in an inferior (at first glance) square and to spend a tempo doing so! But why? Well, let's try to understand with the help of judgement: Black's doubled and isolated b-pawns must be considered as weaknesses, but in fact White cannot attack them, at least for the time being. Black's compensation for these 'weaknesses' is the semi-open a-file, on which he can apply some pressure. Sooner or later, White will have to play a3, creating some 'holes' on b3 and c4. Then Black can continue with ...♘a5 and ...b5 (the reason for 10...♗d7!), creating the possibility of a ...b4 advance, or simply occupying the c4-square with his knight. White will not find it easy to kick this annoying knight away with an eventual b3, as then his a3-pawn will become weak. All in all, Black can aspire to gain the initiative on the queenside, and play on at least equal terms with his opponent. As it turned out, White failed to react adequately and lost a model game. My young eyes (and brain!) were really impressed by this 'strange' plan used by Black. From this moment I understood that, if I wanted to be a good chess-player, I should always plan. The rest of the game looked very easy, although of course White was quite 'helpful':

11 ♗e2 e6 12 0-0 ♗d6 13 ♖fc1 ♔e7 14 ♗c3 ♖hc8 15 a3 ♘a5 16 ♘d2 f5 17 g3 b5 18 f3 ♘c4 19 ♗xc4 bxc4 20 e4 ♔f7 21 e5? ♗e7 22 f4 b5 23 ♔f2 ♖a4 24 ♔e3 ♖ca8 25 ♖ab1 h6 26 ♘f3 g5 27 ♘e1 ♖g8 28 ♔f3 gxf4 29 gxf4 ♖aa8 30 ♘g2 ♖g4 31 ♖g1 ♖ag8 32 ♗e1 b4 33 axb4 ♗a4 34 ♖a1 ♗c2 35 ♗g3 ♗e4+ 36 ♔f2 h5 37 ♖a7 ♗xg2 38 ♖xg2 h4 39 ♗xh4 ♖xg2+ 40 ♔f3 ♖xh2 41 ♗xe7 ♖h3+ 42 ♔f2 ♖b3 43 ♗g5+ ♔g6 44 ♖e7 ♖xb2+ 45 ♔f3 ♖a8 46 ♖xe6+ ♔h7 0-1

Test 1

Efstratios Grivas – Vasilios Kotronias

Karditsa 1984

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 b6 4 g3 ♗a6 5 ♘bd2 ♗b4 6 ♕c2 ♗b7 7 ♗g2 ♗e4 8 ♕d1 ♗xd2+ 9 ♗xd2 0-0 10 0-0 d6 11 ♗c3 ♕e7 12 ♕d2 ♘bd7 13 ♕e3 ♖fe8 14 ♖fd1 ♗b7 15 ♗h3 ♘e4 16 ♗e1 c5 17 ♗g2 ♘df6 18 ♘d2 cxd4 19 ♕xd4 e5 20 ♕d3 ♘c5 21 ♕a3 ♗xg2 22 ♔xg2 ♕b7+ 23 ♔g1 ♖ad8 24 ♘f1 d5 25 cxd5 ♘xd5 26 ♘e3 ♘e6 27 ♘xd5 ♖xd5 28 ♖xd5 ♕xd5 29 ♕a4 b5 30 ♕d1 ♕b7 31 ♗c3 ♘g5 32 ♕f1 ♕d5 33 a3 ♖d8 34 ♖c1 f5 35 ♗b4 ♘e6 36 ♗a5 ♖f8 37 ♖d1 ♘d4 38 ♗c3 ♖d8 39 ♗xd4 exd4 40 ♖d3 ♕a2 41 ♕c1 ♕e6 42 ♕d1 f4 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: After a colourless middlegame, White has exploited an inaccuracy by Black to obtain a superior endgame. This claim is based solely on White's better pawn-structure (weak isolated black d-pawn).

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: In such endgames it is essential to include the king in my winning efforts. As, for the time being, this is not possible due to the presence of queens, I should try to exchange them with 43 ♕b3. Black has nothing better than 43...♕xb3 44 ♖xb3 fxg3 45 hxg3 a6, but then I can go on with 46 ♔f1. My king will be able to approach the centre and attack the black d4-pawn, as well as assist my rook. Moreover, it will prevent the invasion of the black rook on c2, pressurizing my pawns. Also, any possible tactical threats by Black are eliminated.

B: My advantage is obvious and I think that I can even win material with the very simple 43 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 44 ♕xd4 fxg3 45 hxg3 ♕xe2 46 ♕d5+ ♔f8 47 ♕a8+ ♕e8 48 ♕xa7. In this queen endgame my extra pawn will decide matters, even if it will take a long time. A possible continuation could be 48...♕e1+ 49 ♔h2 ♕e5 50 ♕a8+ ♔e7 51 ♕b7+ ♔f6 52 b3, with the idea of creating an outside passed pawn.

C: Winning a pawn, as outlined in B, may be a good idea! But I think it is better to retain both major pieces on the board, so I should proceed with 43 e3 fxe3 44 fxe3 ♕e4 45 exd4 ♖d5 46 ♕d2. Then the battle will be long-lasting but one-sided.

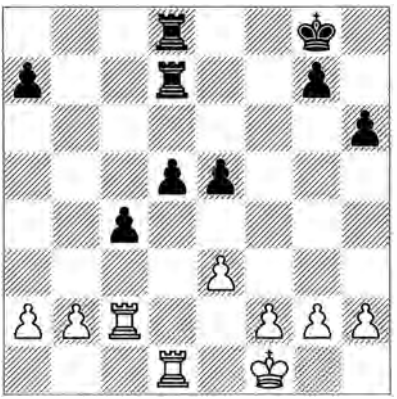
Test 2

Efstratios Grivas – Aris Daniilidis

Athens 1984

1 c4 e6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 d4 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 b6 7 ♖c1 ♗b7 8 cxd5 exd5 9 ♗d3 ♘bd7 10 0-0 h6 11 ♗h4 c5 12 ♕e2 ♘e4 13 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 14 dxc5 ♘xc3 15 ♖xc3 bxc5 16 ♗a6 ♗xa6 17 ♕xa6 ♘f6 18 ♖fc1 ♘e4 19 ♖3c2 ♖fd8 20 ♕d3 ♖d7 21 ♘d2 ♘xd2 22 ♕xd2 c4 23 ♖d1 ♖ad8 24 ♕d4 f6 25 ♔f1 ♕e5 26 ♕xe5 fxe5 *(D)*

White to play



Judgement: White consented to the exchange of queens, as he had accurately evaluated the resulting endgame as better for him. It is true that, at first sight, it seems like White can hardly claim an advantage, but a careful examination and a correct evaluation of the possibilities for both sides proves otherwise! What we need is good endgame knowledge and a productive plan.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: It is obvious that a central break should be on my mind. It is also obvious that in such endgames king activity is important. So, I think I should start with 27 ♔e2 ♖b8 and only then 28 e4 d4 29 ♖xc4 ♖xb2+ 30 ♖d2 ♖xd2+ 31 ♔xd2. In this endgame I should have the better chances, as my rook will go to a5 and then, with the help of the f4 break, I can win material.

B: In contrast with the above-mentioned plan, I do not think that a central break is the solution to my 'problems'. But I think that by means of 27 b3 cxb3 28 axb3 ♔f7 29 ♖a2 ♖b8 30 ♖d3 ♖b6 31 ♖a5 ♔e6 32 ♔e2 I can exert some pressure on Black's pawns, with ideas like f4 and e4. In case of 32...d4 33 exd4 exd4 (33...♖xd4 34 ♖e3) 34 f4 ♔f6 35 ♔f3 I would hold the advantage.

C: I think I can grab the advantage with a central break, starting with 27 e4 dxe4 28 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 29 ♖xc4. Naturally, Black should invade my 2nd rank with 29...♖d2, but then I can play 30 ♖xe4 ♖xb2 31 ♖a4 ♖b7 32 ♖a5. In this position Black will face grave problems, as I can combine the activity of my king and rook to win material.

Test 3

Efstratios Grivas – Spyridon Skembris

Athens 1984

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗b4 4 ♗g5 h6 5 ♗h4 c5 6 d5 ♗xc3+ 7 bxc3 e5 8 ♕c2 d6 9 ♘f3 ♘bd7 10 e3 ♕e7 11 ♘d2 g5 12 ♗g3 ♘h5 13 ♗e2 ♘df6 14 0-0 0-0 15 ♖ae1 ♔g7 16 ♗d3 ♗d7 17 h3 ♘g8 18 ♗f5 ♔h8 19 ♗g4 ♘g7 20 ♗xd7 ♕xd7 21 f4 exf4 22 exf4 f5 23 fxg5 hxg5 24 ♘f3 ♕d8 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: White has succeeded in creating play on the kingside. Black's king is vulnerable, as there are no pawns to protect it. Moreover, Black's pieces are not harmoniously placed, as they assist neither in defence nor in active play. Pawn weaknesses could matter in a possible endgame, but here we are still in the middlegame, where king safety and the initiative are more significant factors. White has a clear advantage but, of course, there is still some work to be done to convert it into a full point.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I should try to take advantage of the only open file, the e-file, doubling my rooks there. Then I shall penetrate into Black's position, creating dangerous threats. Black's defence would be problematic, as he must cover a lot of weak squares (g5, f5, e6, e7).

B: I should try to open more lines on the kingside. This can be achieved by attacking the vulnerable black g-pawn with 25 ♕d2. As 25...g4 is out of the question due to 26 ♘h4, Black should continue with 25...f4 26 ♗h2 ♘f5 (otherwise 27 g3 would be strong) 27 ♖e6, when my multiple threats, such as ♖fe1, h4, g3, ♕e2 and ♘d2 (at the appropriate moment) will give me a decisive advantage.

C: As king safety is an important factor in such positions, I should open more files around the black king. In particular, opening the h-file would be important, as the black king will be greatly exposed on it. Thus, I should continue with 25 h4. Black doesn't seem to have a satisfactory answer: 25...f4 26 ♘xg5, 25...g4 26 ♘g5 or 25...gxh4 26 ♗xh4.

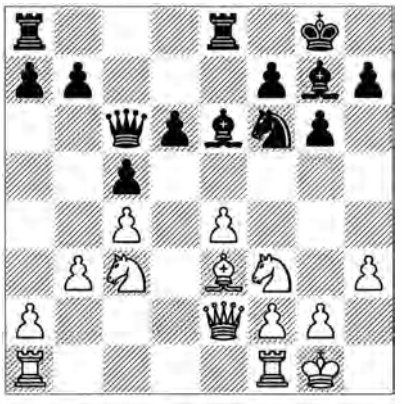
Test 5

Efstratios Grivas – Viswanathan Anand

World Junior Ch, Sharjah 1985

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 d6 4 ♘c3 g6 5 e4 ♗g7 6 ♗e2 0-0 7 ♗g5 e6 8 dxe6 ♗xe6 9 h3 ♘c6 10 ♘f3 ♕b6 11 b3 ♘d4 12 0-0 ♖fe8 13 ♗e3 ♘xe2+ 14 ♕xe2 ♕c6 *(D)*

White to play



Judgement: White controls more space and his pawn-structure is superior to Black's (the d6-pawn is a weakness and the d5-square a potential outpost for the white pieces). On the other hand, Black has the bishop-pair and quite an active position. He can create central pressure and even prepare the ...b5 advance on the queenside. It seems that both sides can be satisfied with their potential, as well as their pluses and minuses. Therefore, the position should be judged as dynamically equal. At this particular moment, White should protect his e4-pawn, which is under attack.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I should protect my e-pawn with the active 15 ♘g5. Then I shall exchange my knight for Black's e6-bishop, protect my e4-pawn with f3 and then, by doubling rooks on the d-file, I obtain a comfortable plus. If Black tries to withdraw his bishop with 15...♗d7, then 16 ♕f3 h6 17 ♘d5 hxg5 18 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 19 ♕xf6 will secure the advantage.

B: I should protect my e-pawn with 15 ♘d2, regrouping my pieces. I should not be afraid of 15...♘g4 16 hxg4 ♗xc3 17 ♖ad1 ♖ad8 18 g5, when I have a very slight but stable advantage. A more serious try for Black is 15...♘h5 16 ♖ac1 f5 17 exf5 ♗xf5 18 ♕f3 ♘f6, with equal chances. I think that I cannot ask for more from my position, as I don't believe I have any positional pluses.

C: Protecting my e-pawn with a knight move cannot result in an advantage. I should instead protect it with 15 ♕d3, improving my queen's position (getting away from the dangerous e-file) at the same time. My plan will be simple but effective: doubling rooks on the d-file and applying pressure on the weak d6-pawn (with a future ♕c2).

Test 4

Maia Chiburdanidze – Efstratios Grivas

Athens 1984

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 d4 exd4 6 0-0 ♗e7 7 ♖e1 b5 8 e5 ♘xe5 9 ♘xe5 bxa4 10 ♕xd4 0-0 11 ♕xa4 *(D)*

Black to play

Judgement: White's unambitious opening choice should in general satisfy Black, who seems to have reasonable chances. As both sides have not yet completed their development, we can only say that it is the correct choice of plan that will decide who (if anyone) will obtain the advantage. Of course, there are certain factors that characterize this particular position: White has a better pawn-structure, as the black a-pawn is isolated and those on c7 and d7 could easily become loose. On the other hand, Black has the bishop-pair and a potentially strong centre as compensation for his inferior pawn-structure. He may later make use of these factors by advancing his c- and d-pawns. In conclusion, the chances are even.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: As 'normal' development does not seem to lead to an advantage, I should think up something different. For example, it seems like a good idea to get my a8-rook into play first of all. So, I would continue with 11...♖b8 (threatening ...♖b4-h4) 12 a3 ♖b6 intending ...♖e6, ...♖e8, ...♗b7, and then advance my central pawns. This plan will give me the advantage.

B: Completing development as soon as possible must be the indicated course of action. I should proceed with 11...♗b7 12 ♘c3 d5 13 ♗g5 (13 ♘c6 ♗xc6 14 ♕xc6 ♕d6 15 ♕xd6 ♗xd6 16 ♗g5 ♗b4 =) 13...♕d6, when my position is fairly good.

C: Completing my development is of course my number one aim, but I should do so in a more active way, starting with 11...♗d6 12 ♘d3 (12 ♘d2 ♖e8 13 ♘df3 ∞) 12...♗b7 13 ♗g5 h6 14 ♗h4 c5. My bishops seem to be very well placed and I have reasonable possibilities of an attack in the future.

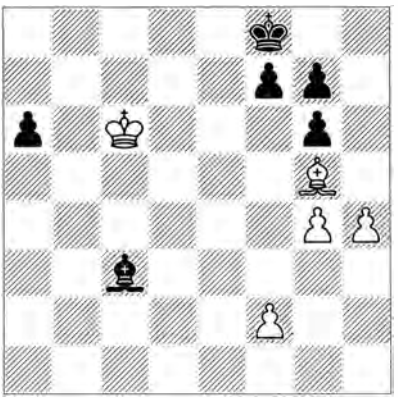
Test 6

Mihai Ghinda – Efstratios Grivas

Egio 1986

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♘xe4 6 d4 b5 7 ♗b3 d5 8 dxe5 ♗e6 9 ♗e3 ♗e7 10 c3 ♘c5 11 ♗c2 ♗g4 12 ♘bd2 ♘e6 13 ♕b1 ♗h5 14 a4 b4 15 a5 ♗g6 16 ♗xg6 hxg6 17 ♖d1 ♖b8 18 c4 dxc4 19 ♘xc4 ♕c8 20 ♕e4 ♕b7 21 ♕g4 0-0 22 b3 ♖bd8 23 h4 ♕b5 24 ♘d4 ♘cxd4 25 ♗xd4 ♖d7 26 ♗e3 ♖fd8 27 g3 ♖d3 28 ♖ab1 ♕d5 29 ♖xd3 ♕xd3 30 ♖b2 ♕c3 31 ♗d2 ♕d3 32 ♗e3 ♕c3 33 ♗d2 ♕d4 34 ♕xd4 ♘xd4 35 ♔f1 ♘c6 36 ♖c2 ♖d3 37 ♗e3 ♖xb3 38 ♔e2 ♖c3 39 ♖xc3 bxc3 40 ♔d3 ♗b4 41 ♗f4 ♘xa5 42 ♘e3 c6 43 ♘d1 ♔f8 44 ♗g5 ♘b7 45 ♘xc3 ♘c5+ 46 ♔c4 ♗xc3 47 ♔xc5 ♗xe5 48 ♔xc6 ♗c3 49 g4 *(D)*

Black to play



Judgement: Black has an extra outside passed pawn and his victory should be considered 'a matter of technique'. This is a typical 'book' endgame, meaning that knowledge should suffice either to win it or to save it, depending on the various possibilities available to the two sides.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I should keep my a-pawn alive until I am about to win something more important. My a-pawn is forcing the white king to keep an eye on it, allowing my own king to invade White's camp. When the time comes, I shall exchange it for one of White's kingside pawns, reaching a theoretically won position. I shall start with 49...a5.

B: White's king has been forced away from his kingside pawns. Thus, a good plan is to exchange my a-pawn for one of White's kingside ones and then attack the remaining ones with my king, which is much nearer that area than its counterpart. Therefore, it looks good to play 49...♗d4 50 f3 ♗f2 51 ♗d2 ♗xh4 52 ♔b6 ♔e7 53 ♔xa6 ♔e6 54 ♔b5 ♔d5, and the second phase of my plan is ready to be executed.

C: I shall utilize the concept of the Plan A, but with a different procedure: 49..f5 50 f3 ♔f7 51 ♔b6 a5 52 ♔b5 ♔e6 53 h5 gxh5 54 gxh5 ♔d5.

Test 7

Efstratios Grivas – Nikiforos Sideris

Athens 1987

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 e6 4 ♘c3 exd5 5 cxd5 d6 6 ♘f3 g6 7 e4 ♗g7 8 ♗g5 h6 9 ♗h4 0-0 10 ♘d2 a6 11 a4 ♖e8 12 ♗e2 ♘bd7 13 0-0 g5 14 ♗g3 ♘e5 15 ♕c2 ♖b8 16 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 17 ♘c4 ♖e8 18 a5 ♘g4 19 ♘d1 ♗d4 20 ♘de3 ♘f6 21 ♗d3 ♕e7 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: White should be happy with the opening's outcome. He has gained a spatial advantage and a strong outpost for his knight on c4. Furthermore, Black's kingside (and his king in general) has been weakened, as the ...g5 advance created some weak squares (h6, f5). On the other hand, Black's position seems solid and his bishop-pair should not be underestimated. White would love to employ the f4 advance, but this is probably a dream, as then his centre will collapse.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: Black is not actually threatening my e4-pawn, as his own on d6 will also fall. But I have to think of how to improve my position. This can be done by centralizing another piece with 22 ♖ae1. Black might go 22...♘g4 23 ♘xg4 ♗xg4 24 ♕b3 ♗d7 25 ♘b6 ♖bd8, with slightly better chances for me due to my spatial advantage.

B: Black's strong d4-bishop must be exchanged. If I can succeed in that, then Black's kingside will be further weakened. Vacating the c2-square for my knight looks like a good idea, so I should play 22 ♕b3 ♕c7 23 ♘c2. Now Black can grab my e4-pawn, but after 23...♘xe4 24 ♘xd4 cxd4 25 ♖fe1 ♗f5 26 ♕a3 ♗g6 27 ♘b6 I feel that I would have more than sufficient compensation for Black's useless extra d4-pawn.

C: Black's weakened kingside should be my guiding light. If I could succeed in exchanging light-squared bishops, then I could place a monster (the e3-knight) on the f5-square. I think I can achieve this by jettisoning my irrelevant e4-pawn. By means of 22 e5 dxe5 (22...♗xe5 23 ♗f5 ♗d7 24 ♗xd7 ♕xd7 25 ♕d3 with sufficient compensation for the pawn) 23 ♗f5 my plan is realized and my compensation should be sufficient for just a pawn.

Test 8

Hristos Bousios – Efstratios Grivas

Patra 1988

1 d4 f5 2 ♘c3 d5 3 ♗f4 a6 4 e3 ♘f6 5 ♘f3 e6 6 ♗e2 ♗d6 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♖c1 ♘c6 9 ♘b1 ♘e7 10 c4 ♘g6 11 g3 c6 12 a3 ♘e4 13 b4 *(D)*

Black to play

Judgement: The game is in the late opening phase, where both players have more or less developed their pieces. White is creating pressure on the queenside with the help of his queenside pawns. In this particular system of the Dutch Defence, the Stonewall, the centre is generally blocked. Black has voluntarily surrendered the e5-square to White, but in return he can develop without facing any immediate threats. Black's knight manoeuvre (...♘c6-e7-g6) seemed good, aiming for better control of the weak e5-square. As experience has taught us, Black should focus on the kingside and, at some point, also on the centre. All in all, White should stand somewhat better, due to the spatial advantage he has acquired out of the opening.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I should try to generate a pawn-storm on the kingside, but my knight on g6 is not helping. Thus, I should move it to f7, from where it will also control the weak e5-square and at the same time help the ...g5 advance. If White tries to avoid my ...g5 advance with a well-timed h4, then my plan should consist of the moves ...g6, ...h6 and only then ...g5. For all these purposes my knight will stand excellently on f7.

B: I should try to prepare the ...e5 advance. This could be done with moves such as ...♕e7, ...♔h8, ...dxc4, and only then ...e5. There is not much that White can do against this plan, so I shall equalize without much effort.

C: I should try to generate immediate activity on the kingside. This can be done by 13...♘xf4 14 exf4 (14 gxf4 g5) 14...g5 15 ♘xg5 ♘xg5 16 fxg5 f4 (16...♕xg5 17 f4). The opening of the centre cannot be to my advantage, but this is compensated by my piece activity around the white king (two bishops plus the semi-open f- and g-files).

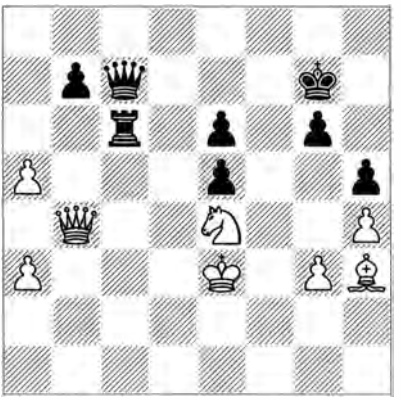
Test 9

Efstratios Grivas – Petar Velikov

Plovdiv 1988

1 e4 c5 2 c3 ♘f6 3 e5 ♘d5 4 d4 cxd4 5 ♘f3 d6 6 cxd4 e6 7 a3 ♗d7 8 ♗d3 ♗c6 9 0-0 ♘d7 10 ♖e1 ♗e7 11 ♘bd2 dxe5 12 dxe5 ♘c5 13 ♗f1 ♘f4 14 ♖e3 0-0 15 ♕c2 ♖c8 16 b4 ♗a4 17 ♕b1 ♘d7 18 ♕e4 ♘d5 19 ♖e1 ♗c2 20 ♕g4 ♗f5 21 ♕g3 a5 22 bxa5 ♘c5 23 ♘d4 ♗g6 24 ♘c4 ♘e4 25 ♕b3 ♗c5 26 ♗b2 ♘dc3 27 ♗xc3 ♘xc3 28 ♘c2 ♘e4 29 ♘2e3 ♕h4 30 g3 ♕e7 31 ♗g2 ♖c7 32 ♖ad1 h5 33 ♘d6 ♘xf2 34 ♔xf2 ♗c2 35 ♕c3 ♗xd1 36 ♖xd1 f6 37 ♔e2 fxe5 38 ♘e4 ♗d4 39 ♕b4 ♕d7 40 ♕b3 ♕e7 41 h4 g6 42 ♗h3 ♖c6 43 ♖f1 ♗xe3 44 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 45 ♔xe3 ♔g7 46 ♕b4 ♕c7 *(D)*

White to play



Judgement: White has the advantage, as he has two (good) minor pieces against a (quite passive) rook. Unfortunately for Black, his extra pawn is of no importance, as it is isolated, weak and blockaded. Moreover, Black's e-pawns are more like weaknesses, as are his b- and g-pawns. Some attention must be paid to the white king's position, as its central presence offers Black some chances for counterplay.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I should attack the e-pawns, starting with the one on e5. This can be done by manoeuvring my minor pieces (by ♗f1 and ♘d2-c4) towards that target and also involving my queen via b5 or c3. Black will not be able to defend this weakness, which will eventually drop. Then I would go after the e6-pawn.

B: I should exchange my a5-pawn for Black's on b7. Then my a3-pawn will become passed, giving me an easy win. I can do that by playing ♗f1-b5 and then a6. After the pawn exchange I shall play ♗d3 and advance my a-pawn.

C: I am sure that I would like to exchange queens at a favourable moment and then proceed with all my forces against the opponent's b-pawn. But Black would never accept this trade, so I must force it by attacking the black king. By manoeuvring my pieces against the black g6-pawn (♘g5, ♗f1-d3 and ♕e4) I would be able either to exchange queens and easily win the endgame or deliver checkmate.

Test 10

Efstratios Grivas – Miodrag Todorčević

European Team Ch, Haifa 1989

1 g3 g6 2 ♗g2 ♗g7 3 f4 c5 4 ♘f3 ♘c6 5 0-0 d6 6 d3 e6 7 e4 ♘ge7 8 c3 0-0 9 ♗e3 b6 10 d4 ♗b7 11 ♗f2 ♖c8 12 dxc5 bxc5 13 ♘bd2 ♕c7 14 ♖e1 ♖cd8 15 ♕a4 ♖fe8 16 ♖ac1 a5 17 a3 ♖a8 18 ♘c4 ♖ed8 19 ♖cd1 ♘c8 20 ♖d2 ♘6e7 21 ♕c2 a4 22 ♘e3 ♘b6 23 f5 ♘c6 24 g4 ♘e5 25 ♗g3 ♘bd7 26 ♖f2 ♖e8 27 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 28 f6 ♗h6 29 ♗f4 ♗xf4 30 ♖xf4 g5 31 ♖f2 c4 32 ♕d2 ♔h8 33 ♖b1 ♘d3 34 ♖ff1 ♕c5 35 ♔h1 ♘f4 36 ♗f3 ♕c7 37 ♘g2 e5 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: Although the game is approaching the 40th move, only a pair of minor pieces has been exchanged. Thus, we are still in the middlegame. Black seems to have control of the position and the deadly threat of ...♕d8, winning the important white f-pawn. White's strategy seems to have failed, as he has acquired weaknesses on f6 and b2, while the e4-pawn is a target for the b7-bishop. Thus, he must seek to complicate the game, trying to break through to his only possible target, the black king. The proper evaluation of the position is based on whether White will manage to create counterplay.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I think that I should exchange on f4 with 38 ♘xf4 gxf4 (38...exf4 39 h4 ♗xe4 {39...h6? 40 hxg5 hxg5 41 ♕h2+ ♔g8 42 ♕h6 +–} 40 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 41 hxg5 is a mess) 39 h4, protecting my weak f-pawn. Then I shall proceed with ♖bd1, with an unclear position.

B: I think I should attack the enemy d-pawn immediately with 38 ♖bd1. After 38...♖ad8 (38...♖e6 39 h4 ∞) I should continue with 39 ♘e3 (39 h4 is met by 39...d5) and ♘f5, increasing the pressure on my target. The possible loss of the f6-pawn can be counterbalanced by capturing any of the weak black pawns (a4, c4 and d6).

C: Commencing activity on the kingside with 38 h4 must be the right plan. Black must be careful, as 38...♘xg2 39 ♗xg2 gxh4 40 ♕h6 ♖g8 41 ♖f5 ♖g6 42 ♕xh4 seems pleasant for me and 38...h6 39 hxg5 hxg5 40 ♘xf4 gxf4 41 ♕h2+ is even winning.

Test 11

Dragan Barlov – Efstratios Grivas

Zonal, Nea Makri 1990

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 ♕e2 b5 6 ♗b3 ♗c5 7 c3 0-0 8 0-0 h6 9 ♖d1 ♖e8 10 d3 ♗f8 11 a3 d6 12 ♘bd2 ♘a5 13 ♗a2 c5 14 ♘f1 ♗e6 15 ♗xe6 ♖xe6 16 ♘g3 g6 17 ♕c2 d5 18 a4 b4 19 ♗d2 ♕e8 20 ♖e1 bxc3 21 ♗xc3 ♘c6 22 ♖ec1 *(D)*

Black to play

Judgement: Both sides have long ago completed their development. White's not very ambitious set-up and some 'mishandling' of the position have allowed Black to obtain more than his fair share of the centre. Black's central pawns are superior and his more harmoniously placed pieces apply greater control of that area. It must also be added that White is facing problems on the b-file, which can be useful only for Black. Therefore, Black holds a pleasant and stable advantage.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I should clarify matters in the centre by playing 22...dxe4. After White's recapture (23 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 24 dxe4) I shall have the opportunity to continue at the appropriate moment with ...♘d4, forcing White to exchange the knight. Then, by playing ...cxd4 I shall obtain a passed and well-protected d-pawn, I shall provide my f8-bishop with more scope, and my rooks on the b- and c-files will have excellent options.

B: The b-file is quite important, so I should restrict all possible play on any other part of the board with 22...d4, denying White any options in the centre and on the kingside. Then, by simply doubling rooks on the b-file and regrouping my pieces on the queenside, I shall have a strong grip on the advantage and chances to increase it, so this must be the right plan.

C: My plans should focus on the centre and the queenside, where I hold the advantage. As I do need to clarify all matters in the centre, I shall continue with 22...♘d4, forcing White to exchange my strong knight (23 ♕d1 does not avoid this, in view of 23...♖b8). After 23 ♗xd4 cxd4 I shall have all the advantages of Plan A and the possibility of a later ...dxe4 as 24 exd5 ♘xd5 in general favours me.

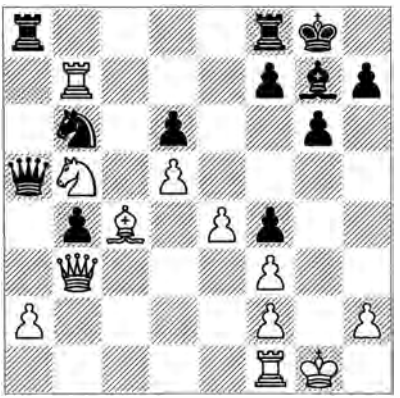
Test 12

Efstratios Grivas – John Cooper

Olympiad, Novi Sad 1990

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 c4 ♗g7 4 ♘c3 0-0 5 e4 d6 6 ♗e2 e5 7 0-0 ♘c6 8 d5 ♘e7 9 b4 ♘h5 10 c5 a5 11 cxd6 cxd6 12 ♘b5 ♘f4 13 ♗xf4 exf4 14 ♖c1 axb4 15 ♕b3 ♗g4 16 ♖c7 ♘c8 17 ♖xb7 ♕a5 18 ♗c4 ♗xf3 19 gxf3 ♘b6 *(D)*

White to play



Judgement: White seems to have created some pressure, as his rook is on the 7th rank and the black d6-pawn is weak. On the other hand, Black has succeeded in finding adequate counterplay on the a- and c-files and seems to have protected his weaknesses by tactical means (20 ♘xd6 ♕c5). The weak kingside pawns of each side (f3 and f4) do not seem to affect any future plan, as it is hard for either side to attack them. The position can be evaluated as dynamically equal, although much depends on the possibility of either side coming up with a strong plan.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I should keep up the pressure on the queenside and for this reason I need to avoid piece exchanges. Thus, I shall keep my bishop with 20 ♗d3 ♗e5 21 ♖b1. Although there is not something that could change the evaluation of the position immediately, I feel that I should stand better.

B: I think that it is quite important to gain control of the c-file. So I should continue with 20 ♖c7, threatening among others ♘xd6 or ♖c6. After the more or less forced variation 20...♘xc4 21 ♕xc4 ♕xa2 22 ♕xb4 ♗e5 (22...♖fb8 23 ♕xd6 ♖xb5 24 ♕d7 ♕b2 25 ♕xf7+ ♔h8 26 e5 ♕xe5?? 27 ♖e7) 23 ♕c4 I should hold a tiny advantage, as I can put some pressure on the d6-pawn.

C: I shouldn't care too much about my c4-bishop. It is more important to create immediate pressure with 20 ♖b1. Then, the exchanges that might occur (...♘xc4 and ...♕xa2) would lead to an endgame where my knight will be a better piece than the black bishop, due to the blocked pawn-chain. If I also succeed in doubling my rooks on the 7th rank, my advantage will increase.

Test 13

Konstantinos Moutousis – Efstratios Grivas

Athens 1991

1 c4 g6 2 g3 ♗g7 3 d4 ♘f6 4 ♗g2 0-0 5 ♘c3 d6 6 ♘f3 ♘bd7 7 0-0 e5 8 e4 h6 9 h3 ♘h7 10 ♗e3 ♘g5 11 dxe5 ♘xe5 12 ♘xe5 dxe5 13 ♔h2 ♘e6 14 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 15 ♖ad1 ♖e8 16 f4 exf4 17 gxf4 c6 18 ♔h1 *(D)*

Black to play

Judgement: Black has an easy game, as he has solved his main opening problems and his pieces are reasonably well placed. Of course, he should consider how to complete his development, especially that of the c8-bishop. White's central pawns are not dangerous, as they cannot move without creating a hole. White holds a spatial advantage, but this does not matter so much as he is unable to utilize it, at least not during this phase of the game. Thus, this position must be approximately equal.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: My pieces are occupying squares on just the first three ranks, so it is too early to think of fighting for the advantage. I should complete my development with ...♘c7 and ...♗e6. A possible continuation could be 18...♘c7 19 ♗d4 ♗e6 20 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 21 b3 ♖ad8 with an approximately equal game. Later, I can even apply pressure on the e4- and f4-pawns.

B: I can seek more than equality, as I can take advantage of White's 'exposed' centre by hitting it with 18...f5. If White replies with 19 e5?, then I can play 19...g5 20 fxg5 ♘xg5, winning the e5-pawn. After 19 exf5 I can continue with my main idea: 19...♘f8 20 ♗g1 ♗xf5 getting the advantage, which will be based on White's shattered pawns on the kingside.

C: I think I should try to create an outpost on e5 by playing 18...g5 19 f5 ♘f8 and ...♘d7-e5. My strong knight will be placed on the excellent e5 outpost, which will give me a certain advantage. Then, I can proceed with either an advance of my kingside pawns (...h5 and ...g4) or by completing my development with ...♗d7, ...b6 and ...♖ad8.

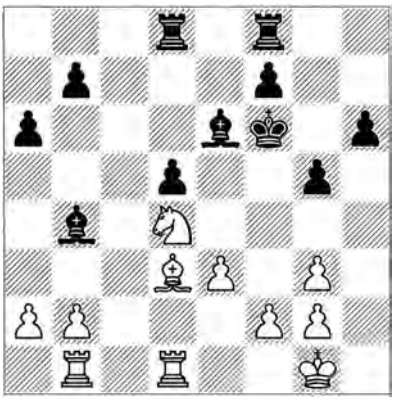
Test 14

Efstratios Grivas – Andreas Kofidis

Komotini 1992

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 c5 5 cxd5 cxd4 6 ♕xd4 exd5 7 ♗g5 ♗e7 8 e3 ♘c6 9 ♗b5 0-0 10 ♕a4 ♗e6 11 ♘d4 ♘xd4 12 ♕xd4 h6 13 ♗h4 g5 14 ♗g3 ♘e4 15 0-0 ♘xg3 16 hxg3 ♗f6 17 ♕b4 ♗e7 18 ♕d4 ♗f6 19 ♕b4 ♗e7 20 ♕a4 ♕b6 21 ♖ab1 ♖ad8 22 ♖fd1 a6 23 ♗d3 ♕b4 24 ♕xb4 ♗xb4 25 ♘e2 ♔g7 26 ♘d4 ♔f6 *(D)*

White to play



Judgement: There are two prevailing strategic elements, one for each side. White has acquired a better pawn-structure, in view of the weak isolated black d5-pawn. On the other hand, Black has gained the bishop-pair, retaining dynamic equality. Of course, in positions with isolated pawns, knights are important pieces, as they can blockade these pawns and operate under their cover.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I should regroup my pieces, gearing towards the isolated black d-pawn. For this purpose, placing my bishop on b3 would be the first step; then I should double rooks on the d-file or regroup my knight (♘e2-c3) towards my main target. Black might get some counterplay on the h-file with ...♖h8 and ...h5-h4, but I do not believe that it would be adequate. So, I can proceed with 27 ♗c2 h5 28 ♗b3 ♖h8 29 ♖bc1 ♗d6 30 ♘e2 h4 31 gxh4 gxh4 32 ♘c3, picking up the pawn.

B: Black's future initiative on the h-file, along with his bishop-pair, should worry me, as my counterplay against the isolated black pawn is not enough. Therefore, a prophylactic sequence like 27 ♗e2 ♖h8 28 ♗h5 seems appropriate. Then I can double my rooks on the d-file and, at the appropriate moment, I can regroup my minor pieces towards my target.

C: In all endgames the power of the king is of undisputed significance. What can be better than to move my king closer to the centre? At the same time, my rooks will be ready for some action down the half-open h-file or the open c-file. So, 27 ♔f1 ♖h8 28 ♔e2 h5 29 ♖h1 h4 30 gxh4 gxh4 31 ♖bc1 is right.

Test 15

Vasily Smyslov – Efstratios Grivas

Rishon le Zion 1993

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 d6 4 d4 cxd4 5 ♕xd4 ♗d7 6 ♗xc6 bxc6 7 0-0 e5 8 ♕d3 h6 9 c4 ♕c7 10 ♘c3 ♘f6 11 ♗e3 ♗e6 12 ♖ac1 ♘d7 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: Black tried a risky variation, which has resulted in him lagging behind in development. Of course, if he manages to castle without problems, then his bishop-pair along with his good centre will leave him perfectly satisfied. In order to evaluate the position it is important to calculate whether White can in some way profit from the time Black will need in order to castle. White seems better, as his development looks harmonious, but the appropriate plan will make all the difference in the evaluation.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I should complete my development with 13 ♖fd1. If Black tries the natural 13...♗e7 I could continue with the tactical 14 ♘d5, achieving a pleasant advantage. If Black first removes his queen from the c-file (13...♕a5), then I can continue with 14 c5, breaking up Black's pawn-structure. All in all, Black will face grave problems.

B: As I do not see much in the centre, I think that I should try to play actively on the kingside, starting with 13 ♘h4. After 13...♗e7 14 ♘f5 ♗xf5 15 exf5 0-0 16 ♘e4 my position is preferable, as I control all the light squares in the centre and my pieces occupy better posts than Black's.

C: I think it is important to take advantage of the undeveloped black kingside. It would be a nice idea to profit from the time that Black needs to finish his development, by trying to obtain some strong squares and open up the queenside. So, I should play the 13 b4 advance, planning b5, which will give me control over the d5-square after the elimination of the opponent's c-pawn. Later, I should concentrate on a c5 breakthrough, which will complete my general plan.

Test 16

Efstratios Grivas – Nikolaos Kalesis

Budapest 1994

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 b6 4 g3 ♗a6 5 ♕b3 d5 6 cxd5 exd5 7 ♗g5 ♗e7 8 ♘c3 ♗b7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 ♗g2 0-0 11 0-0 ♖e8 12 ♖fe1 ♘a6 13 ♖ad1 ♕d6 14 ♕a4 ♖ad8 15 a3 c5 16 e3 ♕b8 17 ♕c2 ♗c6 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: A rather interesting and typical position has occurred. As the centre is blocked, Black cannot take advantage of his bishop-pair. In this type of position, knights seem to be more important than bishops, because they can defend and attack the centre at the same time. In contrast, the bishops can only defend and wait. In view of the above, White should have a slight plus.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: As the indicated way of playing is to keep the centre closed, I should manoeuvre my knights against Black's centre. For this reason I should place them on f4 and c3, from where they will pressurize the black d5-pawn with maximum force. As my f3-knight does not really have any other promising options, it must be the one to place on c3 (♘d2-b1-c3). The other one will head for the f4-square (♘e2-f4). Positions resulting from a future ...c4 or ...cxd4 would be in my favour, as the centre will remain blocked.

B: I should create hanging pawns in the enemy camp and then try to attack them with my knights. So, a continuation such as 18 dxc5 bxc5 19 ♘a4, followed by ♖c1 or b4, gives me reasonable chances to seize the initiative on the queenside.

C: At this particular moment my pieces are very well centralized. Therefore, it is a good moment to open up the centre and at the same time to eliminate the black bishop-pair. I should proceed with 18 e4 dxe4 19 ♘xe4 ♖xe4 20 ♖xe4 ♗xe4 21 ♕xe4, when my central activity and control of the weak light squares will give me a decent advantage. If further exchanges take place on the d4-square, then the endgame with bishop against knight will be in my favour.

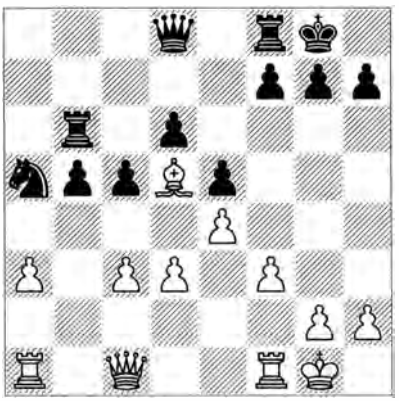
Test 17

John Emms – Efstratios Grivas

Kopavogur 1994

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♘c3 e5 4 ♗c4 d6 5 d3 ♗e7 6 ♘d2 ♘f6 7 ♘f1 ♗g4 8 f3 ♗e6 9 ♘e3 0-0 10 0-0 ♖b8 11 a3 ♘d7 12 ♘cd5 ♗g5 13 c3 b5 14 ♗a2 ♘b6 15 ♘xb6 ♖xb6 16 b4 a5 17 bxa5 ♘xa5 18 ♘d5 ♗xd5 19 ♗xd5 ♗xc1 20 ♕xc1 *(D)*

Black to play



Judgement: Black has reacted precisely and has emerged from the opening phase with a perfectly acceptable position. His problems are now behind him, as he has created counterplay on the queenside and made some useful exchanges, neutralizing a possible attack on the f-file (after White's f4 advance). His pawn-structure seems to be better as White's a-pawn is isolated, but this is compensated by the excellent placement of the d5-bishop. In conclusion, the position offers equal possibilities for the two sides.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: My territory of action should be the queenside, where White's only real weakness lies: the a3-pawn. I should try to open more files in that sector of the board and transfer my pieces there, creating the necessary activity. I should start with 20...c4, opening up some more lines and preparing an attack against the opponent's queenside pawns.

B: The white bishop on the d5-square is an annoying piece, so I should first of all try to minimize its power. For this purpose I should transfer my knight to e7 (...♘c6-e7) and then continue with ...♕c7 and ...c4. This should give me quite a pleasant position, as I can even try doubling my rooks on the a-file, aiming at the a3-pawn.

C: Before I employ my own active plans, I should take care of the pressure towards the f7-pawn that White can create with the natural f4 advance. Thus, I shall continue with 20...♔h8 21 f4 f6. Then I shall be ready to execute my plans on the queenside, involving ...c4, ...♕c7, or ...♘c6-e7 and then ...♕c7, well as doubling rooks on the a-file.

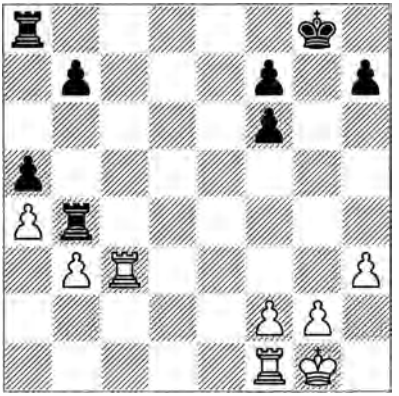
Test 18

Efstratios Grivas – Sotirios Porfiriadis

Iraklion 1994

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 a6 5 a4 e6 6 e3 c5 7 cxd5 exd5 8 ♗e2 ♘c6 9 0-0 ♗d6 10 b3 0-0 11 dxc5 ♗xc5 12 ♗a3 ♗xa3 13 ♖xa3 ♗g4 14 h3 ♗h5 15 ♘d4 ♗xe2 16 ♘dxe2 ♕d6 17 ♖a2 ♖fd8 18 ♖d2 ♕c5 19 ♕c2 d4 20 exd4 ♘xd4 21 ♘xd4 ♖xd4 22 ♘e4 ♕xc2 23 ♘xf6+ gxf6 24 ♖xc2 ♖b4 25 ♖c3 a5 *(D)*

White to play



Judgement: After the compulsory exchanges that took place, White has retained a small plus, solely due to his better kingside structure: the black pawns on f6, f7 and h7 constitute permanent static weaknesses. If Black succeeds in exchanging the queenside pawns and a pair of rooks, even losing the f6-pawn in the process, the game will end in a draw. However, the ending with four rooks and pawns 3:2, with weak black pawns on f7 and h7, is not a simple draw at all. We may say that White would have an approximately 40% chance of winning (and 60% drawing). Consequently, the evaluation of the position as slightly better is justified, as Black will have to defend carefully to achieve the draw.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: It is important to activate my passive f1-rook immediately, as I shall need both my rooks to create pressure against the black kingside pawns. Therefore I shall start with 26 ♖d1, aiming to seize control of the 7th rank or simply to attack the f6-pawn.

B: Before activating my rooks, I should fix my opponent's pawn weaknesses on the kingside. This can be done with 26 ♖g3+ ♔h8 27 ♖f3 ♔g7 28 g4. Meanwhile, Black will be able to exchange the queenside pawns, but I shall still retain good winning chances. I should keep in mind that I must preserve both my rooks.

C: I should avoid the exchange of both of my queenside pawns, as it will then be more difficult to create winning chances. Thus, I should place one of my rooks in a passive position for the time being (26 ♖a1), as I need time to activate my king and my other rook. When I am ready, I shall also activate my passive rook.

Test 19

Sotirios Porfiriadis – Efstratios Grivas

Iraklion 1994

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 e6 4 0-0 ♘ge7 5 ♖e1 a6 6 ♗xc6 ♘xc6 7 c3 d5 8 exd5 ♕xd5 9 d4 ♗e7 10 dxc5 ♕xd1 11 ♖xd1 ♗xc5 12 ♘bd2 e5 13 ♘e4 ♗e7 14 h3 ♗f5 15 ♘d6+ ♗xd6 16 ♖xd6 ♔e7 17 ♖d1 *(D)*

Black to play

Judgement: White's opening treatment was not ambitious, allowing Black to equalize easily. The opposite-coloured bishops do not give either side reason to hope for more than a draw. Further exchanges will confirm this fact, but the difference in rating between the two players forces Black at least to try. Another positive fact for Black is that his kingside majority is potentially more active than White's on the queenside. Objectively the position is equal.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: One interesting idea is to disorganize White's pieces. I should play 17...♗c2, giving White a choice between the 'ugly' 18 ♖d2 and abandoning the d-file with 18 ♖e1. In the latter case, I can try to double rooks on the d-file and then either advance my majority or employ a minority attack on the queenside, or even do both.

B: White's 'threat' of ♗e3-b6 will secure him control of the d-file, so I should react immediately with 17...♖hd8 18 ♗e3 ♖xd1+ 19 ♖xd1 ♖d8. Of course then the draw would be quite near, but I do not see how I can do something more than that. Objectively the position is drawish, so I must live with that.

C: I should play on, avoiding further exchanges. First of all, I should deprive White's bishop of some important squares. I shall start with 17...b6 18 ♗e3 ♖ab8, followed by ...f6 and ...g5/...h5, expanding on the kingside. Ideas like ...♘a5-c4 and ...♗e6 will always be there and, although my position does not seem to improve much, I have chances to take advantage of even the slightest mistake White may commit, due to my 'pressure'.

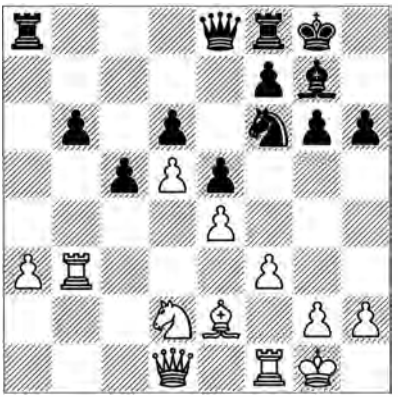
Test 20

Vlastimil Babula – Efstratios Grivas

Olympiad, Moscow 1994

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 d5 a5 8 ♗g5 h6 9 ♗h4 ♘a6 10 ♘d2 ♕e8 11 0-0 ♗d7 12 ♖b1 ♘h7 13 a3 a4 14 ♘b5 ♗xb5 15 cxb5 ♘c5 16 f3 b6 17 ♗f2 ♘f6 18 ♗xc5 bxc5 19 b4 axb3 20 b6 cxb6 21 ♖xb3 *(D)*

Black to play



Judgement: A typical 'King's Indian' middlegame has arisen. White has sacrificed a pawn, trying to open files on the queenside, where he believes he should concentrate his efforts. Thus, White enjoys pressure on the queenside and the better bishop. However, the fact that he already has a clear plan is even more important. I would say that the position is unclear, but if Black does not find the correct plan, then it will be an easy day at the office for White.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: First of all, I should try to keep my extra pawn on the queenside by means of 21...♕b8 22 ♘c4 ♘d7 23 ♕b1 ♕c7. Then I can double rooks on the a-file, where White's only weakness, the a3-pawn, lies. I think I shall have sufficient counterplay down the a-file, plus an extra pawn.

B: I should do approximately the same as outlined in Plan A, but I shall also seek activity on the f-file. With 21...♕d8 22 ♘c4 ♖b8 23 ♕b1 ♕c7 I shall be ready for the ...f5 advance.

C: As White has already chosen the queenside as his main theatre of action, I should concentrate on the part of the board where most of my pieces are present, the kingside. The opposite-coloured bishops generally assist a potential attack and, in this particular position, as White is missing his dark-squared bishop, he has a lot of weaknesses on the dark squares. Therefore, I should conquer these squares by ...♕e7-g5, ...♘h5-f4, ...♗h6 and of course the thematic advance ...f5. Naturally, White will dominate the queenside, but if I do the same on the kingside, then my threats will prove decisive, as my main target is his king.

Test 21

Efstratios Grivas – Lorenc Rama

Ilioupolis 1995

1 d4 d5 2 c4 ♘c6 3 e3 e5 4 cxd5 ♕xd5 5 ♘c3 ♗b4 6 ♗d2 ♗xc3 7 bxc3 ♕d6 8 ♘e2 ♘f6 9 ♘g3 0-0 10 ♗e2 ♘e7 11 0-0 c5 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: The opening phase is near its end. Both sides have already gained some advantages. White has the bishop-pair, while Black enjoys the healthier pawn-structure. Black has correctly attacked White's centre with his c- and e-pawns, trying to create some fundamental weaknesses. On the other hand, this might easily rebound, if White hits upon the appropriate plan.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: Since my main weapon in this particular position is the bishop-pair, I should be happy to clarify the situation in the centre. An interesting pawn sacrifice can take place after 12 ♗f3 cxd4 13 cxd4 exd4 14 exd4 ♕xd4. After 15 ♗e3 ♕xd1 16 ♖fxd1 followed by ♖ab1, I would definitely have serious compensation for the pawn, as my queenside pressure and the bishop-pair in an open position are of great significance.

B: As my centre is under attack, I should choose which capture is in my favour. I should opt for 12 dxc5 ♕xc5 13 e4. My pawn-structure is worse than Black's, but my two bishops (and especially the dark-squared one, which will be placed on e3), plus the semi-open b-file, will give me slightly better chances in the coming middlegame.

C: My thinking process should be exactly as Plan B, but I should choose the other capture. I should proceed with 12 dxe5, creating an unbalanced pawn-structure. Both sides would have a pawn-majority, each on a different side of the board, but I believe that mine (kingside) will prove more significant, as it can be activated far more easily. By pushing my e- and f-pawns and helped by my bishop-pair, I will ensure central control and attacking possibilities against the enemy king. So, I shall play 12 dxe5 ♕xe5 13 f3 ♘ed5 14 ♕c1 and so on.

Test 22

Ioannis Papaioannou – Efstratios Grivas

Iraklion 1995

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 a6 6 ♗e3 c6 7 ♗d3 b5 8 e5 ♘fd7 9 f4 bxc4 10 ♗xc4 ♘b6 11 ♗b3 a5 12 ♘f3 0-0 13 0-0 ♗a6 14 e6 f5 15 ♖e1 ♗c4 16 ♘g5 ♘a6 17 ♗f2 ♗xb3 18 ♕xb3 ♘b4 19 ♕d1 a4 20 g4 fxg4 21 ♘f7 ♕e8 22 a3 ♘4d5 23 ♕xg4 ♘f6 24 ♕f3 *(D)*

Black to play

Judgement: White didn't handle the opening correctly and has ended up in an unpleasant position with a lot of pawn weaknesses. His light squares will also eventually prove rather weak. So White correctly tried to play actively and generate an attack on the black king, as compensation for his structural disadvantages. On the other hand, Black has a pleasant advantage, in view of the above-mentioned factors. But he has to be on the alert, as his kingside seems to be a little bit cramped and he needs time to activate his pieces.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: White's weaknesses can wait, while the f7-knight looks like a thorn in my side. The idea of sacrificing the exchange can prove quite strong and sufficient for a healthy advantage. Thus I should prepare it, starting with 24...♘bd5 25 f5 ♖xf7 26 exf7+ ♕xf7. My control over the whole board seems quite pleasant. A piece and a healthy pawn for a rook is not that high a price to pay.

B: Although White's weaknesses seems to be numerous (b2, d4, f4, h2), only one of them is really important and accessible to my pieces. This is the pawn on f4, which in the meantime is ready to advance, creating attacking chances for White. So, I should first fix it and attack it, by means of 24...♖a5. Then ...♖f5, ...♘h5 and ...♘d5 will follow, giving me a solid advantage.

C: Increasing control over the light squares and exchanging the strong f7-knight should be my main objectives. I should proceed with 24...d5 25 f5 ♘c4 26 fxg6 hxg6 27 ♕g2 ♘d6. Exchanges are in my favour, as they will eventually lead to an endgame that is good for me.

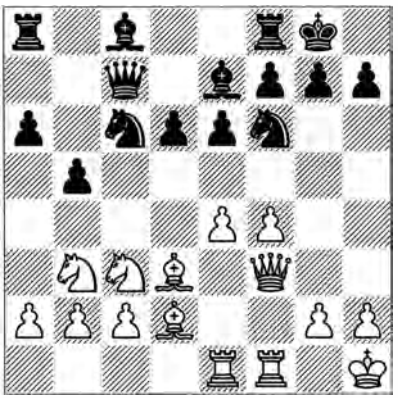
Test 23

Konstantinos Prentos – Efstratios Grivas

Greek Team Ch, Athens 1996

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♕b6 5 ♘b3 ♘f6 6 ♘c3 e6 7 ♗d3 d6 8 0-0 a6 9 ♔h1 ♗e7 10 f4 ♕c7 11 ♗d2 b5 12 ♕f3 0-0 13 ♖ae1 *(D)*

Black to play



Judgement: This is a theoretical position in a variation of the 'Grivas Sicilian', which is characterized by 4...♕b6. An extremely complicated position has arisen, as is usual for this line, which requires, above all, good calculation. White is ready to launch an attack on the kingside (and in the centre), but Black always seems to have adequate resources to retain the dynamic balance. Of course, finding the correct plan is more than a necessity; it is absolutely the only way to survive!

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: The main factor in the position is White's intended activity on the kingside and in the centre. His d3-bishop might emerge as a very dangerous piece, as it is directed towards my king. So, the correct handling of this position requires my expansion on the other side of the board. I should proceed with 13...b4 14 ♘d1 (or 14 ♘e2) 14...a5, preparing ...a4 and ...♗a6 to exchange off the dangerous white bishop. Then I think that I shall have created more than enough counterplay on the queenside, which should be my main field of action.

B: My main concern should be to complete my development and connect my rooks. So, I should play the natural 13...♗b7. White's best seems to be 14 ♕h3, threatening 15 e5. But then I can continue with the 'tactical' 14...♖ad8, defending against the threat (15 e5 dxe5 16 fxe5 ♘xe5 17 ♗f4 ♗d6 18 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 19 ♖xf6 ♖xd3) and achieving an equal share of the chances after 15 a4 b4 16 ♘d1 d5 17 e5 ♘e4, as already seen in many games.

C: I would agree with the thinking process of the previous plan, but instead of 14...♖ad8 I prefer to defend against the deadly 15 e5 with 14...g6. White can proceed 15 e5 (15 f5 is another possibility) 15...dxe5 16 fxe5 ♘d7 17 ♗f4 ♘cxe5 18 ♕g3 ♗d6 19 ♗xb5 axb5 20 ♘xb5 ♕b6 21 ♘xd6 ♕xd6 22 ♗xe5, with an equal position.

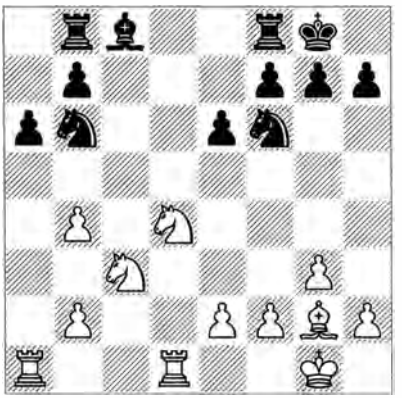
Test 24

Efstratios Grivas – Ilias Kourkounakis

Greek Team Ch, Athens 1996

1 d4 e6 2 ♘f3 c5 3 g3 ♘f6 4 ♗g2 d5 5 c4 dxc4 6 ♕a4+ ♘bd7 7 ♕xc4 a6 8 ♕c2 cxd4 9 ♘xd4 ♗b4+ 10 ♗d2 ♕e7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♖d1 ♘b6 13 ♗xb4 ♕xb4 14 ♘c3 ♘c4 15 ♕b3 ♕xb3 16 axb3 ♘b6 17 b4 ♖b8 *(D)*

White to play



Judgement: A typical 'Catalan' middlegame has arisen. Black hasn't handled the opening correctly, leaving White with the initiative and a slightly better position in general. The typical 'Catalan' monster (the g2-bishop) is again working full-time, controlling many squares on the long diagonal. White's knights are well placed, his rook is already on d1 and the other one is ready to work on the a-file. Although Black has fallen behind in development, his position does not have any real weaknesses, so White's advantage is not permanent and, with any (even minor) slip, it could disappear.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: When all one's pieces are in good positions, it can sometimes be a problem, as they cannot be improved! But I think that my d4-knight is actually not very well placed, as it has no targets and also limits my d1-rook's activity on the d-file. So, I think that the manoeuvre ♘b3-a5 would improve my position, as my knight will find a nice target on b7 and my d1-rook will be ready to invade Black's camp in the near future.

B: As my pieces are all on their best possible squares, I should improve my pawn-structure. I should proceed with 18 e4 e5 (18...♗d7 is out of the question due to 19 e5) 19 ♘f5 ♗xf5 20 exf5. Now my advantage is greater, as Black's rook is tied to the protection of the b-pawn, so I can calmly double rooks on the d-file.

C: It cannot be bad to blast open the a-file, where my rook already stands. With 18 b5 axb5 19 ♘cxb5 (19 ♘dxb5 ♗d7 20 ♘d6 ♗c6) my position would further improve, as my knight will land on the d6-square.

Test 25

Efstratios Grivas – Angelos Vouldis

Greek rapid Ch, Athens 1996

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 g3 ♗g7 4 ♗g2 0-0 5 0-0 d6 6 a4 a5 7 ♘c3 d5 8 ♘e5 c6 9 e4 dxe4 10 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 11 ♗xe4 ♗h3 12 ♖e1 ♘d7 13 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 14 ♗e3 ♖ad8 15 c3 ♗g4 16 ♕b3 ♗e6 17 ♕c2 ♗d5 18 ♗xd5 cxd5 19 ♗f4 ♖c8 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: As a lot of pieces have been exchanged and no permanent weakness has been established, it seems that Black has managed to equalize. On the other hand, Black no longer has the possibility of a minority attack on the queenside at his disposal, due to the fact that he has played ...a5. If the black a-pawn were on a7, then Black would have a strong and simple plan with ...b6, ...a6, ...b5-b4, creating weaknesses in White's camp. So, both sides are facing problems in finding an appropriate plan. But it seems that White has slightly greater freedom in finding play on either side of the board, and so he must hold a tiny plus.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I should concentrate on the centre, exchanging my 'bad' bishop (most of my pawns are on squares of the same colour as this piece) with 20 ♗e5 ♗xe5 (20...f6 21 ♗f4 creates weaknesses on the e-file) 21 ♖xe5 e6 22 ♖ae1, intending h4-h5. My advantage will be slight but stable, with practically with no risk involved.

B: I should find play on the queenside, where there are some fixed targets, such as the black pawns on a5 and b7. Starting with 20 ♕b3, I shall be able to regroup my forces with ♕b6, ♖a3-b3 and, with the help of my very well placed f4-bishop (which controls the important b8- and c7-squares) I shall obtain excellent chances.

C: I should draw up a plan on the kingside, playing 20 ♕d2 with ideas like ♗h6, ♔g2, h4-h5 and ♖h1. Black can do little to create counterplay, as a future advance with ...b5 will only weaken his queenside, while I can easily defend mine with ♖e2. My kingside activity will be more important than any Black can create.

Test 26

Anar Allahverdiev – Efstratios Grivas

European Team Ch, Pula 1997

1 c4 g6 2 g3 ♗g7 3 ♗g2 d6 4 ♘c3 e5 5 d3 f5 6 e3 ♘f6 7 ♘ge2 0-0 8 0-0 c6 9 b4 ♗e6 10 b5 d5 11 ♗a3 ♖e8 12 ♕b3 *(D)*

Black to play

Judgement: Here we again enter the game at a late opening phase. Both sides have tried to develop harmoniously, but with different ideas about their middlegame plans on their minds. White expects that his pressure on the queenside will prove effective, while Black is relying on his strong central pawns. Possibilities for retaining the equilibrium or gaining an advantage depend on the right choice of plan.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: White's bishops are dominating a lot of squares. One of my first intentions should be to restrain their power, by closing down the diagonals. I should start by restricting the g2-bishop with the natural 12...e4. White has to clarify matters in the centre, so a response like 13 bxc6 bxc6 14 ♘d4 (14 ♕b7 ♕d7 15 ♕xa8 ♘a6 16 ♕xe8+ ♕xe8 ∓) 14...dxc4 15 ♕b7 ♘bd7 16 dxe4 fxe4 17 ♘xc6 ♕b6 18 ♖ab1 looks reasonable and seems to offer equal chances in a somewhat unclear position. As Black I can be happy with this outcome of the opening: I have at least neutralized White's standard tiny opening advantage.

B: I should retain the tension in the centre for as long as I can benefit from it. But I also think that I must take care of White's threat of bxc6 and ♕b7. So, I need to get some breathing space on the queenside for my a8-rook. Therefore I would continue with 12...a5 13 ♖ad1 d4. My well-placed pieces, along with my initiative in the centre, should give me a pleasant game.

C: I should not underestimate White's initiative on the queenside and I must first of all protect my weak spots (b7, c6 and d5). If I can combine this kind of prophylaxis with active, positional or tactical threats, then my position should be quite acceptable. So, I should proceed with 12...dxc4 13 dxc4 and now 13...♕c8 or 13...e4 should retain the equilibrium.

Test 27

Efstratios Grivas – Yuri Poluektov

Limassol 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 ♘c6 3 cxd5 ♕xd5 4 e3 e5 5 ♘c3 ♗b4 6 ♗d2 ♗xc3 7 bxc3 ♘ge7 8 c4 ♕d6 9 d5 ♘d8 10 e4 c5 11 ♘e2 ♗d7 12 ♘g3 g6 13 ♗d3 f6 14 ♖b1 h5 15 0-0 h4 16 ♘e2 g5 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: Black chose an unusual opening set-up. He has decided to keep the position closed, neutralizing White's bishop-pair. He also has ideas like placing one of his knights on d6 and the other one on f4, which look very promising. Although White seems to be on top as he enjoys a well-protected passed pawn, the bishop-pair and a significant spatial advantage, there is the question of how to proceed.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: As the kingside and the centre seem blocked, I should concentrate on the remaining flank. A continuation such as 17 ♘c3 a6 (17...♘g6 18 ♘b5 ♕b8 19 ♗e3 b6 20 ♗e2 ♘f4 21 ♗g4 ♗xg4 22 ♕xg4 a6 23 ♘c3 ♕d6 24 ♘a4 ♖b8 25 ♖xb6 +–) 18 ♕b3, with ideas like ♗e3 and ♘a4 to follow, should give me a clear advantage.

B: The semi-open b-file can and should be exploited. My rook is already placed on that file but of course I need more pieces transferred to that part of the board. I could also exchange the light-squared bishops in order to weaken the light squares in Black's camp. A possible continuation could be 17 a4 ♘g6 18 a5 ♘f4 19 ♗c2 ♘xe2+ 20 ♕xe2 or 17 ♗c2 ♘g6 18 ♗a4, with a clear advantage in both lines.

C: My advantages are quite valuable and I should try to benefit from them in a direct way. A sacrifice like 17 f4 comes into consideration. After 17...gxf4 18 ♘xf4 exf4 19 ♗xf4 ♕a6 20 e5 my bishops come to life, my passed pawn is ready to advance and the black king will come under fire. Of course I shall be a piece down, but all my remaining pieces will be active and ready to exploit the presence of the opponent's king in the centre. In view of the above, I think my compensation will be more than fine.

Test 28

Efstratios Grivas – Nikolaos Gavrilakis

Greek Ch, Athens 1997

1 c4 e5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 g3 g6 5 ♗g2 ♗g7 6 0-0 0-0 7 d4 exd4 8 ♘xd4 ♖e8 9 ♘xc6 bxc6 10 ♕a4 a5 11 ♖d1 ♕e7 12 ♗f4 ♖a7 13 a3 ♕c5 14 ♖d3 ♘g4 15 ♖f1 ♗xc3 16 ♖xc3 ♖xe2 17 ♖c2 ♖e8 18 h3 ♘f6 19 ♗e3 ♖xe3 20 fxe3 ♕xe3+ 21 ♔h2 ♘h5 22 ♖f3 ♕e5 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: White has won the exchange for two pawns, resulting in approximate material equality. Black's poorly placed and uncoordinated pieces constitute his main problem. His rook and bishop are out of play, at least temporarily, and this fact might prove costly. On the other hand, White cannot hope to benefit from this in a potential endgame unless he can improve the coordination of his own pieces. So, it is important to coordinate and direct his pieces towards some specific target.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I should use the open b- and e- files to penetrate my opponent's camp. As his king is relatively unprotected, I shall have good chances to create mating threats. So, I shall start with 23 ♕b3, threatening 24 ♕b8. After the forced 23...♖a8 I can continue 24 ♖e3 ♕f6 25 ♖e8+ ♔g7 26 ♕e3, intending ♖f2, with a clear plus.

B: As in Plan A, I should penetrate my opponent's camp. But I think it is better to do it with 23 ♖cc3, intending ♖fe3. I can also transfer my queen to the kingside by means of c5 and ♕h4. This must give me a strong attack and I feel confident that it will be decisive.

C: I do not think that I can attack the black king, as my forces do not seem to be adequate in number and sufficiently well placed for that purpose. I think it would be better to add another small plus to my overall advantage, that of a passed pawn. This can be created with 23 b4 followed by c5 and bxa5. This will be enough for a slow but sure win, as Black is lacking serious counterplay.

Test 29

Efstratios Grivas – Hristos Bousios

Greek Ch, Athens 1997

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 d6 3 ♘c3 e5 4 ♘f3 exd4 5 ♘xd4 ♗d7 6 g3 ♘c6 7 ♗g2 ♗e7 8 0-0 0-0 9 b3 ♕c8 10 ♖e1 ♘xd4 11 ♕xd4 ♗c6 12 e4 ♘d7 13 ♗b2 ♗f6 14 ♕d2 ♖e8 15 ♖ad1 a5 16 f4 ♗xc3 17 ♕xc3 f6 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: White's advantage is undisputed. He possesses the bishop-pair, a strong centre and a valuable spatial advantage. On the other hand Black's pieces are squeezed into his first three ranks, unable to create any active play. But although Black has a passive position, it is a tough nut to crack. Long manoeuvres with specific ideas are the way to exploit the advantage.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: As in most similar cases, it is important to seize even more space, squeezing the opponent further. I should carry out a quick advance with a3 and b4, gaining control over the c5-square (denying it to Black's d7-knight) and then, at the appropriate moment, proceed with c5 or g4-g5 in order to give my b2-bishop maximum power.

B: I should always keep in mind that a successful e5 advance, opening up the position and releasing the power of the b2-bishop, will be in my favour. So, first of all I should reinforce my control of that critical square, by doubling rooks on the e-file. Then, slowly but surely, I would take control of c5 (by a3 and b4), further restraining the passive d7-knight, and, as a third step, I shall try to advance my kingside pawns (g4, h4 and g5), preparing the final attack against the black king.

C: My position looks quite strong and Black's pieces are not well coordinated. I think that I should seek a more complicated battle, starting with the 18 c5 advance/sacrifice. Black is forced to accept it with 18...dxc5 (as 18...♘xc5 19 e5 fxe5 {19...♗xg2 20 exf6 ♗e4 21 f7+} 20 ♗xc6 bxc6 21 fxe5 looks more than good for me) but then I can play 19 ♗h3 with various threats, such as ♕c4+ and ♕f7, or ♕d3/d2, or just the thematic advance e5.

Test 30

Saša Veličković – Efstratios Grivas

Athens 1998

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 ♘ge2 d6 4 g3 g6 5 d4 ♗g4 6 dxc5 dxc5 7 ♕xd8+ ♖xd8 8 ♗e3 ♗f3 9 ♖g1 ♘f6 10 ♗g2 ♗xg2 11 ♖xg2 b6 12 ♖d1 ♖xd1+ 13 ♔xd1 ♗g7 14 f3 ♘d7 15 f4 0-0 16 ♔c1 ♖d8 17 ♖g1 *(D)*

Black to play

Judgement: White was not in an ambitious mood and chose a rather dull opening, trying just to retain the equilibrium. Consequently, it was an easy task for Black to obtain at least an equal position. However, since White has neither created any weaknesses in his pawn-structure nor misplaced any of his pieces, it is rather difficult for Black to drum up some kind of initiative or any strong positional threats.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: Creating winning chances is not easily accomplished. But I think with 17...♗d4 I should be able to improve my position, as White will be forced to exchange bishops with 18 ♗xd4 (18 ♔d2 ♘f6 cannot be recommended to White) 18...cxd4 19 ♘d1. Then I can continue with 19...e5 and later ...♘c5. My pawn-structure has been improved and my knight has found a strong base on c5, as it is not easy for White to play b4; it would create weaknesses in his queenside pawn-structure.

B: It's quite important to find an appropriate square for my d7-knight. I think that the solution should revolve around the important d4-square, so I would continue with 17...♘d4 18 ♖d1 ♘b8 19 e5 ♘bc6. Then my knights will be very well placed, protecting each other. I can also break up the centre with ...f6 later. Although the position remains tough, I am on the right path and I feel that my initiative will grow.

C: I think that my position will not improve if I just manoeuvre quietly. I'd rather improve their placement and attack White's centre with 17...♘f6 18 h3 e5. White must play 19 f5 ♘d4 20 fxg6 ♘xe2+ 21 ♘xe2 ♘xe4 22 gxf7+ ♔xf7 23 g4 and this should give me some initiative, as the unbalanced pawn-structure helps me in my winning efforts.

Test 31

Enamul Hossain – Efstratios Grivas

Olympiad, Elista 1998

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♘c3 e5 4 ♗c4 d6 5 d3 ♗e7 6 ♘d2 ♘f6 7 h3 ♗e6 8 ♘f1 *(D)*

Black to play

Judgement: Although it's quite early to give a clear positional assessment, as both sides have hardly completed their development, there are some factors that cannot be ignored. Black has voluntarily accepted a weak square on d5 but it is not easy for White to benefit from it. The manoeuvre ♘d2-f1-e3, aimed directly at this square, loses valuable time, especially connected with the prophylactic h3. Pawn moves in the opening are very important and often leave their mark on the subsequent middlegame play and strategy. The position should offer equal chances in a complex middlegame, and the discovery of the most appropriate plan is necessary.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I should benefit from the loss of time involved in the ♘d2-f1-e3 manoeuvre. Therefore, I should open up the position as quickly as possible, continuing with 8...d5. After the exchanges that might occur on this square, I shall have rid myself of the square's weakness, and will have gained more space in the centre. By completing my development (...0-0 and bringing my rooks to the centre) my position will be more than fine.

B: I should proceed with my usual plan in this type of position, castling and then exchanging the dark-squared bishop with ...♘d7-b6 and ...♗g5. White would control the d5-square but this is not so serious. After some exchanges, my position will be solid enough.

C: As in Plan B, I would also choose a harmonious development, castling immediately and then proceeding to create counterplay on the queenside with ...♖b8, ...a6 and ...♘d4, aiming basically for the ...b5 advance. This will provide more space on the queenside, which will serve as compensation for the weakness of the d5-square. The plan with ...♘d7-b6 and ...♗g5 will always be kept in mind.

Test 32

Efstratios Grivas – Vadim Chernov

Olympiad, Elista 1998

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 d6 3 ♘c3 ♘bd7 4 e4 e5 5 d5 ♘c5 6 f3 a5 7 ♗e3 ♗e7 8 ♕d2 0-0 9 ♘ge2 ♘e8 10 ♘c1 f5 11 exf5 ♗xf5 12 ♘b3 b6 13 ♘xc5 bxc5 14 ♗d3 ♗h4+ 15 g3 ♗xd3 16 ♕xd3 ♗g5 17 0-0 ♗xe3+ 18 ♕xe3 a4 19 ♖ae1 ♘f6 20 ♕d3 ♕d7 21 ♕c2 ♖fb8 22 ♖e2 ♖b4 23 ♘e4 ♕f5 24 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 25 f4 ♖f8 26 ♖ff2 ♕f5 27 fxe5 ♕xc2 28 ♖xc2 dxe5 29 ♖fe2 ♖f5 30 ♖ed2 ♖f6 31 ♖e2 ♖f5 32 ♖e3 ♔f7 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: The weaknesses in Black's pawn-structure (a4, c7, c5 and e5) appear – and are – serious. As a result, White has the advantage. However, the problem of converting this advantage into victory remains complicated, as Black seems able to defend, as these weaknesses are not accessible to the white rooks.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I think that it is important to exchange one pair of rooks, as this will enable my king to be centralized. The procedure should be something like 33 ♔g2 ♔f6 34 ♖f3 ♖xf3 35 ♔xf3 ♔f5 36 g4+ ♔g5 37 ♔g3 h6 38 h4+ ♔f6 39 ♔f3 ♔e7 40 ♔e4 ♔d6, and now, with 41 ♔f5 I shall be able to exploit Black's pawn weaknesses.

B: I think that my rooks are rather passive and I cannot immediately attack Black's pawn weaknesses in a useful manner. Therefore, I must use a logical but extraordinary idea: voluntarily relieving Black of an inaccessible weakness (a4) to enable my rooks to attack the others (c7, c5 and e5). After 33 b3 axb3 (33...a3 34 ♖f2 ♔f6 35 g4 ♖xf2 36 ♔xf2) 34 axb3 I can continue with 35 ♖a2 and ♖a5.

C: As my c2-rook is tied down to the protection of my pawns on c4 and b2, I should lighten its burden with 33 a3. After 33...♖b6 (33...♖b3 34 ♖xb3 axb3 35 ♖c3) 34 ♖ce2 ♔f6 35 ♔g2 I can try various ideas, such as exchanging a pair of rooks and activating my kingside pawns with g4 and h4. There is nothing forced, but I feel that my advantage will tell in the long run.

Test 33

Efstratios Grivas – Hrisanthos Pountzas

Kalavrita 1998

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 c5 4 g3 cxd4 5 ♘xd4 ♘c6 6 ♗g2 ♗c5 7 ♘b3 ♗e7 8 ♘c3 d6 9 0-0 ♗d7 10 ♗f4 ♕b8 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: Black's opening play was not really up to par and he now seems to face grave problems. His light-squared bishop is not well developed (it should be placed on the long diagonal), his c6-knight should be on d7 and the b5-square is not (yet) covered with ...a6. In sharp contrast, White has a menacing lead in development and much better placed pieces. Of course, all these privileges White enjoys are temporary advantages and can easily evaporate if not properly handled. So, true enough, White has the advantage, but only the right plan would confirm this and allow him to benefit from it.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: Activity and initiative should be my main concern. As the d6-pawn seems to be quite weak, I should focus my efforts on that. I should proceed with 11 ♘b5. Black is limited to two answers: 11...♘e5 12 ♘a5 ♗xb5 13 cxb5 d5 14 ♘xb7 ♕xb7 15 ♗xe5 ♕xb5 16 e4, or 11...e5 12 ♗g5 ♘g8 (12...a6 13 ♗xf6 gxf6 14 ♘c3 ±) 13 ♗xe7 ♔xe7 14 ♕d2 a6 15 ♘c3. In both cases White should feel more than happy.

B: As I feel that there is nothing forced, I should strengthen my position further and gain more space with 11 e4. A possible continuation is 11...0-0 12 ♕e2 h6 13 ♖fd1 ♖d8 14 ♖d2, doubling rooks on the d-file. Black cannot easily play ...a6, as then ♘a4 is strong. I believe that my advantage has increased.

C: To benefit from my advantages I should open up the position. This is best done with 11 c5. True, Black will get rid of one of his headaches, the d6-pawn, but this would hardly be an achievement, as my pieces could then plunder his suspicious position. Black should react with 11...e5 (11...♘e5 12 ♘a5 ♗c8 13 ♗xe5 dxe5 14 c6) 12 cxd6 ♗xd6 13 ♗g5, but then I should be on top.

Test 34

Efstratios Grivas – Spyridon Kapnisis

Athens 1999

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♘f3 ♘bd7 6 ♕c2 ♗d6 7 a3 0-0 8 ♗d2 ♕e7 9 ♖d1 a6 10 ♗d3 e5 11 dxe5 ♘xe5 12 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 13 cxd5 cxd5 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: This is a typical position with an isolated queen's pawn. Black has accepted this potential endgame weakness, but as compensation he has achieved excellent piece development and generally must be satisfied with his middlegame possibilities. Well, from all the above we might think that White is in trouble! This is not true, as White has acquired an important target (the d5-pawn) and adequate development. But he has still to deal with the possible advance ...d4 and in general seek exchanges.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: It seems to be the best time for me to regroup my pieces, gaining control over important squares and diagonals. This is best done with 14 ♘e2, preparing ♗c3 and ♘g3. This manoeuvre does not only stop a potential ...d4 advance, but also offers my pieces their best placement.

B: I think that my pieces are standing well and my main problem is to place my king in a safe location. At the same time I should be on the alert and not allow Black to achieve the ...d4 advance, as then my advantage would evaporate. My idea should be to transfer my queen to the kingside, where it will protect my king and at the same make attacking gestures towards the black one. Therefore, I should play 14 ♕a4 and ♕h4.

C: As Black's pieces are well developed, I think that I should not have any real advantage. Moreover, concern for my king's safety should be a priority. To solve this problem I should continue with 14 f4 ♕e7 15 0-0, retaining equality. If Black plays 15...♗c5 16 ♖de1 ♗d7 17 ♔h1 I have no reason to complain.

Test 35

Efstratios Grivas – Athanasios Karayiannis

Greek Team Ch, Kavala 1999

1 d4 d5 2 c4 ♘c6 3 cxd5 ♕xd5 4 e3 e5 5 ♘c3 ♗b4 6 ♗d2 ♗xc3 7 bxc3 exd4 8 cxd4 ♘f6 9 ♘f3 0-0 10 ♗e2 ♘e4 11 0-0 a5 12 ♕c2 ♘d6 13 ♖fc1 h6 14 ♗e1 ♗d7 15 ♕b2 ♖fc8 16 ♖c5 ♕e4 17 ♖ac1 ♕e8 18 ♘e5 a4 19 ♘xc6 a3 20 ♕b4 bxc6 21 ♖a5 ♘b5 22 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: White's position is clearly preferable. The advantages of the bishop-pair and the better pawn-structure (the black pawns on c7, c6 and a3 are isolated and weak) give him good winning chances, in the near or distant future. In such positions, the side with the advantage usually has at his disposal more than one reasonable plan, and more than one pleasant move at each turn. A serious chess-player must nearly always choose the safest and most appropriate plan to crown his efforts.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: The black c-pawns are weak but I am not sure that I shall be able to attack them effectively. I think I can transform my advantage into something completely different with the help of 23 d5 cxd5 24 ♗xb5 ♗xb5 25 ♖xc7, when I have a rook on the 7th rank and chances to create an attack aided by the opposite-coloured bishops with ♕d4 and ♗c3.

B: I think that I should take the pawn offered with the simple 23 ♗xb5 cxb5 (23...♖b8 24 ♕xa3) 24 ♖xc7. I am one pawn up, my rook is well placed on the 7th rank and my d-pawn is already passed. These advantages should be enough to score the full point sooner or later.

C: My advantages are of a permanent nature and should remain so! I should not be in a hurry to win material, but first reinforce my position. A plan like ♕c5, ♗f3 and ♗b4 creates many problems for Black, who must then look out for the d5 advance at each turn.

Test 36

Artur Yusupov – Efstratios Grivas

Greece vs Germany, Corfu 1999

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 c4 ♗g7 4 g3 0-0 5 ♗g2 d6 6 0-0 ♘c6 7 d5 ♘a5 8 ♘bd2 b5 9 cxb5 ♘xd5 10 ♖b1 c5 11 bxc6 ♘xc6 12 ♘b3 ♘b6 13 ♘fd4 ♘xd4 14 ♘xd4 d5 15 a4 *(D)*

Black to play

Judgement: Black's opening experiment seems to be a success, as he has obtained good pawn control over the centre and has developed without much trouble. That's a fair achievement in a game against a much stronger opponent, but it still can prove pointless if Black does not continue in appropriate fashion. White is trying to become active on the queenside (15 a4), as there is little point in him playing in the other two sectors of the board, which are Black's natural territory to develop his own plans.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: White's threat is 16 a5 and 17 ♘c6, which will win material (my d5-pawn). I think I should strengthen my centre with 15...e6, which looks like a very natural reaction to White's threat. Play can go on with 16 b3 (16 a5 ♘c4) 16...a5 and I am ready for ...♗b7 and ...♖c8, with at least equality.

B: I see the threat described in Plan A, but I think it is better to advance my e-pawn to e5, setting up a powerful centre. Alas, this cannot be done immediately: 15...e5 16 ♘b3 (16 ♘c6 ♕c7 17 a5 ♕xc6 .18 axb6 ♕xb6 19 ♕xd5 =) 16...♗e6 17 ♘c5 and White gains the bishop-pair, while 15...♗b7 16 a5 ♘c8 17 a6 would be even worse. Instead, 15...♕d7 should be the first step. The important c6-square is sufficiently covered and I am ready for ...e5 and a later ...♗b7. This idea will allow me to play for more than the half-point.

C: Stopping White's activity on the queenside should be my main concern. The natural reply 15...a5 wouldn't do any harm to my future plans, which consist of central occupation with ...e5. I am not afraid of 16 ♘c6 ♕c7 17 ♗xd5 ♘xd5 18 ♕xd5 ♗b7 and the weak b5-square can be controlled by my c8-bishop.

Test 37

Ivan Ivanisević – Efstratios Grivas

Khania 2000

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 h3 0-0 6 ♗g5 ♘a6 7 ♗d3 e5 8 ♘f3 exd4 9 ♘xd4 ♘c5 10 0-0 h6 11 ♗c1 ♖e8 12 ♖e1 c6 13 ♗c2 d5 14 cxd5 cxd5 15 e5 ♘fe4 16 f3 ♘xc3 17 bxc3 ♖xe5 18 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 19 ♗xh6 ♕h4 20 ♕d2 *(D)*

Black to play

Judgement: Black had an easy time in the opening, as White's play was hardly annoying. As a result, he has achieved at least equal chances in a complex middlegame. White is weak on the kingside dark squares, his c3-pawn is not something to be proud of, and his c2-bishop lacks a future. Of course, Black's position also has some defects, such as his isolated d5-pawn (although this should hardly be called a 'weakness'), but overall he should feel quite happy with his position.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I should immediately take advantage of the weak dark squares around the white king. Combining my queen and bishops by 20...♕g3 21 ♗e3 ♕h2+ 22 ♔f1 b6, with ...♗a6+ to come, gives me an excellent attacking position, in which my chances are certainly much better than White's.

B: I think I shouldn't overestimate my position. Natural development with 20...♗d7 21 ♗g5 ♕h5 22 ♗b3 ♗c6 will result in an unclear position with equal chances. I should be satisfied with this, as I have succeeded in equalizing with the black pieces. That should the first step in the normal course of events.

C: I think that my position should offer me good possibilities of grabbing the initiative. First of all, I should decide on where to place my pieces. I think that my c5-knight, although excellently placed at first sight, is too far away from the weak white kingside and also blocks the c-file, where White's weak c3-pawn is situated. Improving that piece with 20...♘e6 21 ♗e3 ♘f4 is an important first step. Then I can calmly bring the rest of my pieces into battle (...♗d7, ...♖c8).

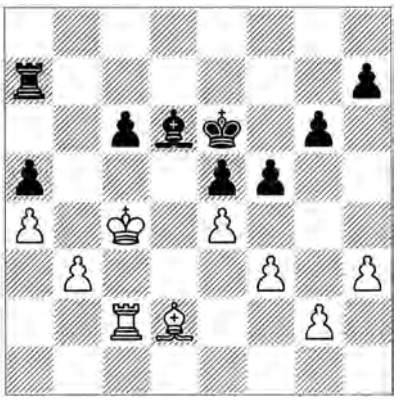
Test 38

Efstratios Grivas – Georgios Mastrokoukos

Greek Team Ch, Athens 2001

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 h3 e5 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 9 ♗g5 ♖e8 10 ♘d5 ♘xd5 11 cxd5 c6 12 ♗c4 cxd5 13 ♗xd5 ♘c6 14 ♔e2 ♘b4 15 ♗c4 ♗e6 16 ♖hc1 ♘c6 17 ♗e3 f6 18 ♘d2 ♔f7 19 ♗b5 ♖ec8 20 ♗xc6 ♖xc6 21 ♖xc6 bxc6 22 b3 a5 23 ♖c1 ♖a6 24 a4 ♗f8 25 ♘c4 ♖a8 26 ♗d2 ♗xc4+ 27 ♖xc4 ♖a6 28 ♔d3 ♔e6 29 ♖c2 ♗d6 30 ♔c4 f5 31 f3 ♖a7 *(D)*

White to play



Judgement: White's superiority seems unquestionable: he has the better pawn-structure, as the black pawns on a5 and c6 are isolated and weak; the white bishop is clearly stronger than its black counterpart, as it has ready-made targets (a5 and e5); the white king is also better placed. Still, the problem of converting the positional advantage to material gain remains. Which plan should (and can) White follow?

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I should try to open a second front, in order to invade with my rook into Black's camp. This can only be done on the kingside, so I shall start with 32 h4, planning h5 and ♖c1-h1. If Black tries 32...h5 then I can prepare the g4 advance with ♖c1-g1, exf5+ and g4.

B: My bishop needs a second target to operate successfully. This can only be Black's e5-pawn. So, I shall proceed with 32 exf5+ gxf5 33 g4, planning ♗c3 and ♖e2, threatening among others ♗xe5 and f4. The principle of two weaknesses will be my guide.

C: Although it seems strange at first, I must exchange the bishops and the black a-pawn, thus relinquishing two of my main advantages! But what will I gain in exchange for this concession? After these exchanges a rook ending will arise, where my outside passed a-pawn, with my rook correctly placed (behind the pawn) and the king ready to invade the enemy camp, will soon bring victory. So, I shall proceed with 32 ♖a2 ♔d7 33 ♗c3 ♔e6 34 b4, transforming my advantage.

Test 39

Efstratios Grivas – Nikolaos Skalkotas

Greek Team Ch, Athens 2001

1 d4 e6 2 ♘f3 c5 3 g3 b5 4 ♗g2 ♗b7 5 0-0 ♕b6 6 c3 ♘f6 7 ♗g5 ♘e4 8 ♗e3 ♘a6 9 ♘bd2 ♖c8 10 a4 ♘xd2 11 ♕xd2 b4 12 ♖fd1 d5 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: White has already completed his development and must think about his future plans. Black's expansion on the queenside seems menacing, although his pieces are not that well placed (the knight on a6 and bishop on b7). Of course, Black has to take care with his further development. Until that is completed, White seems to be in the driving seat, as he has the move and at least two tempi that Black will require. White must find the right plan if he wants to establish his advantage.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: Black has fallen behind in development, as he gave a higher priority to quick queenside activity. I cannot say that my pieces are excellently placed, but, in order to benefit from all the above, I should open up the centre, taking advantage of the two moves (at least) that Black needs to complete his development (...♗e7/d6 and ...0-0). 13 c4 is a good idea, clearing away all the central pawns at some point and thus reinforcing the power of the 'buried' g2-bishop. As Black cannot continue with 13...dxc4 14 dxc5 ♗xc5 15 ♕d7+ ♔f8 16 ♘e5, I am sure that my position should be preferable.

B: I think that I should be active on the queenside and try to open some files there. In this case I could benefit from the badly placed black pieces. So, 13 a5 ♕b5 14 dxc5 ♗xc5 15 ♗xc5 ♕xc5 16 ♖dc1 0-0 17 ♘e5 should give me the advantage, as my pieces are better placed and create threats (18 ♘d7).

C: I have noticed that Black's kingside is lacking pieces, as nearly all of them are placed on the queenside. Thus, an expansion on the kingside seems to be the right policy, starting with 13 ♘e5 c4 14 f4 f6 15 ♘f3 ♗d6 16 g4. Then, by intending g5, gxf6, ♔h1 and ♖g1, I shall enjoy a pleasant initiative on the kingside and particularly against the black king.

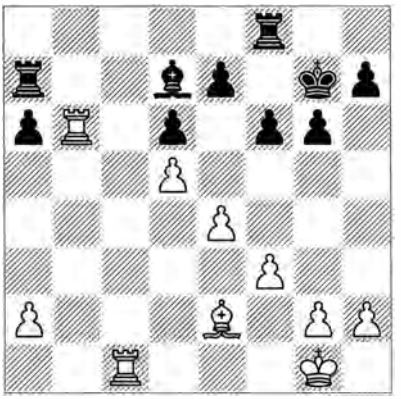
Test 40

Peter Meister – Efstratios Grivas

2nd Bundesliga 2001/2

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 a6 6 ♗e3 c6 7 ♗d3 b5 8 ♘ge2 ♘bd7 9 b3 0-0 10 ♕d2 bxc4 11 bxc4 c5 12 0-0 cxd4 13 ♘xd4 ♘e5 14 ♗e2 ♗d7 15 ♘d5 ♘c6 16 ♖ab1 ♘xd4 17 ♗xd4 ♘xd5 18 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 19 cxd5 ♕c7 20 ♕d4+ f6 21 ♖fc1 ♕a7 22 ♕xa7 ♖xa7 23 ♖b6 *(D)*

Black to play



Judgement: A very interesting position, which at first glance seems to be favourable for White, due to his possession of the only open files (b- and c-). However, the battlefield is not restricted to the open files, but also includes the part of the board where Black has a natural pawn-break, i.e. ...f5. But first of all, Black should deal with White's threat to the a6-pawn. The chosen defence must be in accordance with his future plans and ideas in general. It should be mentioned that this position, without the bishops and Black's a-pawn, greatly resembles a drawish endgame typical of the Benko Gambit.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I think it is quite important to exchange one pair of rooks, in order to relieve White's pressure on the queenside. A line like 23...♖c8 24 ♖xc8 ♗xc8 25 a4 f5 does not look bad, especially since I shall have succeeded in playing the important ...f5 advance. Then I shall move my king closer to the centre (...♔f6-e5), with sufficient counterplay to keep the equilibrium.

B: I think I should not advance my a-pawn too far, and neither should I exchange a pair of rooks. Instead, it wouldn't be bad to exchange the bishops with 23...♗b5. White has a lot of options: 24 ♗xb5 axb5 25 ♖c2 ♖fa8 26 ♖xb5 ♖xa2 =, 24 ♔f2 f5 25 ♔e3 ∞, 24 ♗d1 or 24 ♖c2, but I believe that I can solve my problems in all cases.

C: I think I need both my rooks in play. One of them (the a7-rook) will defend and the other will operate down the f-file, which is about to be opened. So, I shall proceed 23...a5 24 ♗b5 ♗xb5 25 ♖xb5 f5 26 a4 fxe4 27 fxe4 ♖f4 28 ♖c4 ♔f6, probably with roughly equal chances in an endgame that is difficult to evaluate.

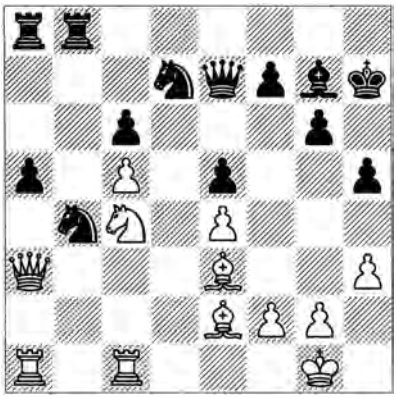
Test 41

Vadim Milov – Efstratios Grivas

Rethymnon (rapid) 2002

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♗e2 0-0 6 ♗g5 ♘a6 7 ♘f3 e5 8 0-0 h6 9 ♗e3 ♕e8 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 ♘d2 b6 12 ♖b1 c6 13 b4 ♘c7 14 c5 b5 15 a4 a6 16 ♖a1 ♗e6 17 ♕c2 ♕e7 18 h3 h5 19 ♖a3 a5 20 ♘a2 ♗xa2 21 ♖xa2 ♘a6 22 ♖aa1 ♘xb4 23 ♕b3 ♖fb8 24 ♖fc1 bxa4 25 ♕xa4 ♔h7 26 ♕a3 ♘d7 27 ♘c4 *(D)*

Black to play



Judgement: Black has won the a-pawn thanks to some fine play in the opening and a little help from his opponent! But White has reacted quite well after this unfortunate moment (losing the pawn) and has created dangerous counterplay, mainly on the queenside. His compensation also consists of the bishop-pair and some weak squares in Black's camp, notably d6 and b6. Also, the b4-knight seems to lack targets. Black should be careful not to find himself on the losing end.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: As one of White's advantages is the bishop-pair, I should seek an exchange with 27...♗h6. True, I am returning my extra material after 28 ♗xh6 ♔xh6 29 ♘xa5 (29 ♕e3+ ♕g5 is fine for Black), but I think that after 29...♖a7 (doubling on the a-file) 30 ♕e3+ ♔g7 I shall have achieved a fine position.

B: My main concern should be to keep my extra material; otherwise White will just stand better. Thus, a move like 27...♕d8 is essential. White can then play 28 ♘b6 ♘xb6 29 cxb6, but after 29...♗f8 I should feel OK. White cannot regain the pawn with 28 ♘xa5, as he will not be able to unpin his knight.

C: White's initiative is really dangerous, but I think I can neutralize it with an exchange sacrifice. This can be effected by 27...♘xc5 28 ♘b6 (28 ♘xa5 ♖xa5 29 ♕xa5 ♘b3) 28...♘e6 29 ♘xa8 ♖xa8. As compensation for the exchange, I shall have two passed pawns, plus the excellent d4-outpost for my knight. The fact that my pieces will come to life is even more important.

Test 42

Boris Avrukh – Efstratios Grivas

Nikea 2003

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 ♗e3 ♕e7 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 ♘d5 ♘xd5 10 cxd5 c6 11 d6 ♕d7 12 h4 b6 13 h5 ♗a6 14 hxg6 hxg6 15 ♗h6 ♗xe2 16 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 17 ♕d2 ♗xf3 18 ♕h6+ ♔f6 19 ♕xf8 ♗xe4 20 0-0-0 c5 21 ♖h7 ♘a6 22 ♕h6 ♕f5 23 f3 ♗c6 24 ♕h4+ ♕g5+ 25 ♕xg5+ ♔xg5 26 ♖xf7 ♖d8 27 g3 ♘b4 28 a3 ♘d5 29 ♖e1 ♖xd6 30 ♖xe5+ ♔h6 31 ♖xa7 ♘f6 32 g4 ♘d7 33 ♖e7 ♔g5 34 ♖c7 ♔f6 35 ♖e3 ♘e5 36 ♖c8 *(D)*

Black to play

Judgement: After quite an interesting middlegame, where White lost his way in the jungle of various pleasant possibilities at his disposal, an endgame has been reached. Black obviously holds the advantage, mainly on pure materialistic reasons: two active pieces for a rook and a pawn. Of course, there is always the problem of how to proceed – how to cash in the point. We often find that not all roads lead to Rome. Maybe some of them are shorter than others, while some may even lead in the wrong direction entirely.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I think it would be nice to 'balance' the material with 36...♘xf3 37 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 38 ♖xf3+ ♔g5. This balance concerns only the arithmetic value of the material, as the quality of my remaining pieces is much higher than White's. Soon my opponent's g-pawn will fall and I shall win the endgame.

B: White's kingside pawns must be my target. So, first of all I should blockade them with 36...g5. I think that White has nothing better than 37 ♖f8+ ♔g7 38 ♖f5 ♘f7 39 ♖e7 ♖f6 40 ♖e3 ♔g6, which should enable me to win without many problems.

C: I do not need to give back my extra material or blockade any pawns. I shall just defend against my opponent's annoying checks with the simple 36...♘f7 37 f4 ♗d5 38 ♖f8 c4. If now White goes 39 g5+ ♔f5 40 ♖e7 ♔xf4 41 ♖exf7+ ♗xf7 42 ♖xf7+ ♔xg5 43 ♖c7 ♔f5 44 ♖xc4 g5, the resulting rook endgame should be winning.

Test 43

Efstratios Grivas – Ulf Andersson

Internet (ICC blitz) 2004

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♗xc4 a6 6 0-0 c5 7 a3 b5 8 ♗a2 ♗b7 9 ♕e2 cxd4 10 ♖d1 ♘c6 11 exd4 ♗e7 12 ♘c3 0-0 13 d5 exd5 14 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 15 ♗xd5 ♕c7 16 ♗e3 ♖ac8 17 ♖ac1 ♕b8 18 b4 ♘d8 19 ♗a7 ♕xa7 20 ♕xe7 ♕b8 21 ♖xc8 ♕xc8 22 ♗xb7 ♘xb7 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: White has emerged from the opening with a clear advantage. This advantage, although obvious, is based on concrete strategic elements. White's queen has already invaded Black's camp, his rook is ready to help the queen and his knight can also prove dangerous. Black's knight is in a terrible situation and is his main headache. If, for example, it were standing on f6, then Black wouldn't be so badly off. But this is not yet so, and it is up to White to find the way to convert his advantage into something more concrete, viz. material gain (23 ♕d7 ♕xd7 24 ♖xd7 ♖d8 25 ♘e5 f6 = does not work).

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I think I should invade immediately with my rook on the 7th rank. After 23 ♖d7 ♘d8 (23...♕c1+ 24 ♘e1) 24 ♖c7 ♕f5 25 h3 ♘e6 26 ♖a7 I shall be ready to win material, as my combined pressure (from queen and rook) on the 7th rank is too much for Black to handle.

B: Before anything else, I should create a bolt-hole for my king with 23 h3, after which I shall be able to invade the 7th rank. After 23...♘d8 24 ♘g5 ♕c2 25 ♕xd8 (25 ♖xd8 ♕c1+ 26 ♔h2 ♕f4+) 25...h6 26 ♕d3 ♕xd3 27 ♖xd3 hxg5 28 ♖d6 I shall surely be on top.

C: Like in the previous plan, I should create some *luft* for my king but with 23 h4 instead, threatening both 24 ♖d7 and 24 h5 followed by h6, eventually creating a strong post for the knight on g5. What more can one ask from such a simple pawn move? Black must seek to improve the placement of the b7-knight as soon as possible, but even after 23...♘d8 24 ♘g5 ♘e6 25 ♘xe6 I should hold a serious endgame advantage.

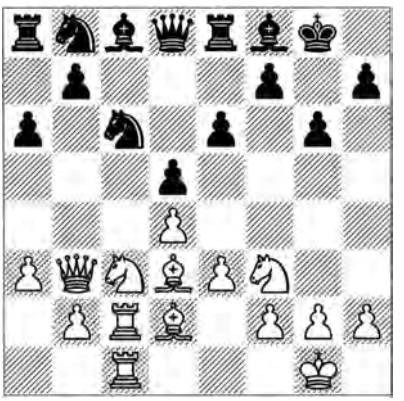
Test 44

Efstratios Grivas – Alekper Shakhtakhtinsky

Athens 2004

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 g6 5 e3 ♗g7 6 ♗d3 0-0 7 0-0 ♘a6 8 cxd5 cxd5 9 ♕b3 e6 10 ♗d2 ♖e8 11 ♖fc1 ♗f8 12 a3 ♘d7 13 ♘b5 ♘db8 14 ♖c2 ♘c6 15 ♖ac1 ♘ab8 16 ♘c3 a6 *(D)*

White to play



Judgement: White obviously stands much better, because he controls far more territory than his opponent. His pieces are harmoniously placed on the queenside and his rooks are ready to exploit the open c-file. In contrast, Black's pieces are squeezed together on his back rank (how about placing the c6-knight on h8?) and can hardly move. His position is not collapsing immediately, mostly thanks to his main defender, his well-supported knight on c6. So, as no position can be won without a reasonable plan, White should choose the most effective one.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: Continuing the pressure on the queenside with 17 ♘a4 is the right attitude. After the more or less forced 17...♘d7 I should exchange some pieces to gain some entry squares, starting with 18 ♗b4 ♗xb4 (18...♗g7 19 ♗d6) 19 axb4, preparing ♘c5 and/or the b5 advance.

B: I do not think it is that easy to exploit the 'closed' c-file, as Black seems to defend against any invasions. When there are passive and badly placed pieces, the right way to exploit this is to open up the position. It is then that the quality of piece placement really matters. Therefore, I should continue with 17 e4, opening up the centre and trying to exploit, among other things, the weak dark squares around the black king. The weakness of the d4-pawn is irrelevant, as White's 'compensation' will be tremendous.

C: I should increase the pressure on the queenside and therefore continue with ♕a2, b4, ♘a4-c5, ♕b2 and a4. Then I will be ready to exploit the c-file, which will be opened after the b5 advance. I do not see any counterplay by Black coming any time soon, so I have the necessary time to work on my plan.

Test 45

Efstratios Grivas – Nikolaos Kalesis

Greek Team Ch, Aghia Pelagia 2004

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 ♗b4+ 4 ♘bd2 d5 5 a3 ♗e7 6 g3 0-0 7 ♗g2 b6 8 0-0 ♗b7 9 cxd5 ♗xd5 10 ♕c2 ♘bd7 11 e4 ♗b7 12 e5 ♘d5 13 ♘e4 h6 14 ♖e1 c5 15 dxc5 ♘xc5 16 ♘xc5 ♗xc5 17 b4 ♗e7 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: White enjoys a small spatial advantage, mostly thanks to his e5-pawn. There are no pawn weaknesses for either side, and also no misplaced pieces. This makes the choice of the right plan even more complicated. White enjoys a slightly better position, but as there are no concrete targets, this advantage can easily evaporate.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I should concentrate on the queenside, where my pawns are well advanced. I shall start with 18 ♗d2 ♖c8 19 ♕b2 and then a4-a5. Black's counterplay seems insufficient, as he doesn't have any entry squares for his pieces, nor any active plan. My advantage will be slight but stable.

B: As my e5-pawn secures me more ground on the kingside, I should transfer my pieces to this part of the board, creating attacking chances. The black king seems inadequately protected, as the black knight cannot access the f6-square, nor can any other piece contribute to the defence. Moreover, the pawn on h6 is a potential target for a sacrifice. If Black tries to liberate his position with the ...f5 advance, then the creation of a permanent pawn weakness on e6 will give me a clear positional target. So, I shall start with 18 ♕e4 and ♕g4.

C: I think that the c6-square could be turned into a strong outpost, particularly for my f3-knight. For this purpose I must push my b-pawn to b5 and exchange the light-squared bishops. Then, with ♘d4-c6 I shall have created an excellent basis for my plans on the queenside and in the centre. I shall start with 18 ♗b2 ♖c8 19 ♕d2 and then ♖ad1 and ♘d4, with strong pressure in the centre and on the queenside.

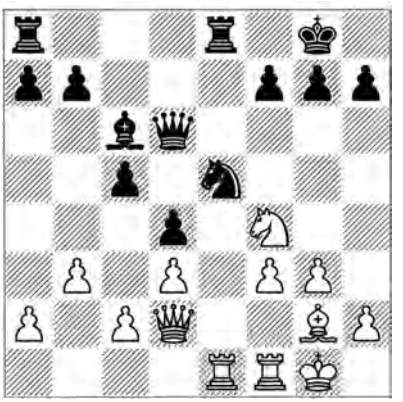
Test 46

Ilias Mastoras – Efstratios Grivas

Greek Team Ch, Aghia Pelagia 2004

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 e6 3 ♘ge2 ♘c6 4 g3 d5 5 exd5 exd5 6 ♗g2 d4 7 ♘d5 ♗d6 8 d3 ♘ge7 9 ♘xe7 ♘xe7 10 ♗f4 ♘g6 11 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♕d2 ♗d7 14 b3 ♗c6 15 ♘f4 ♘e5 16 f3 ♖fe8 17 ♖ae1 *(D)*

Black to play



Judgement: White's opening treatment was surely not a success. White made it clear that a draw was his main aim, but it is well known that if you want to split the point with a stronger player, you have to be active and force him in a worse position; you have to deliver the message that he might be in trouble! An equal position is bread and butter for the stronger player, as he can go on testing his opponent without too much risk. In the position above Black has achieved a significant advantage. His pieces are standing excellently, while White has to be on the alert. Still, Black must find an appropriate plan.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: White has weakened his dark squares too much. I should benefit from this, utilizing the power of my queen. A continuation like 17...♕h6 (threatening 18...♘g6) 18 ♕d1 ♘g6 19 ♘xg6 hxg6 could be quite dangerous. After the possible 20 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 21 ♖e1 ♖e3 I would preserve my advantage, thanks to the outpost on e3 and the better minor piece.

B: As I cannot do much in the centre and on the kingside, I should focus on the queenside, where I can organize a breakthrough. Thus, I should proceed with 17...a5, planning ...a4, ...axb3 and an invasion by my rook. If White tries 18 a4, then after 18...b5 19 axb5 ♗xb5 I can still continue with ...a4 and a later ...c4.

C: Doubling rooks on the e-file is the right way to improve my position. White will not be able to oppose this with his own rooks, as he must cover the f3-square. After this simple and standard idea, I think that my position should improve and, although I do not see anything forced, the feeling is that I am on the right path.

Test 47

Efstratios Grivas – Sotirios Logothetis

Greek Team Ch, Ermioni Argolidas 2005

1 c4 e6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 g3 dxc4 4 ♕a4+ ♘d7 5 ♕xc4 a6 6 ♗g2 b5 7 ♕c2 ♗b7 8 0-0 ♘gf6 9 b3 c5 10 ♗b2 ♗e7 11 d3 0-0 12 ♘bd2 ♕b6 13 ♖ac1 ♖ac8 14 ♖fd1 ♖fd8 15 a3 ♕a7 16 ♕b1 ♕a8 17 ♕a1 ♘e8 18 ♖c2 ♗f6 19 ♖dc1 ♗xb2 20 ♕xb2 ♖c7 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: White's unambitious opening play has allowed Black to feel that he is near equality. Although White remains at a safe distance from the battlefield (on the three first ranks), his pieces have occupied their best possible squares. The semi-open c-file is in White's favour, as his rooks apply constant pressure on the black c5-pawn. White should stand a tiny bit better.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: Black's c-pawn is weak of course, but there is no chance to benefit from it, as I cannot attack it with greater force than Black can defend it with. So, I should forget about it and try to open some lines for my doubled rooks, benefiting from Black's queenside pawn-structure. I think that after 21 d4 ♖dc8 22 dxc5 ♘xc5 23 b4 ♘a4 24 ♕b3 ♖xc2 25 ♖xc2 ♘f6 my pieces are standing a little bit better and, in a future endgame, Black's queenside pawns will be a target for my light-squared bishop.

B: The b4 advance should nearly always be on my mind. However, I think that this is not the appropriate moment to employ it, as I do not get anything special after the possible exchanges. I think that, before executing this advance, I must weaken Black's b-pawn. This is best done with 21 a4. If Black continues with ...b4 I shall gain the excellent outpost c4 for my knight, while if he just follows a waiting policy, then I shall proceed with axb5 and b4, creating a weak black b-pawn. This plan should give me a slight advantage.

C: I think that a type of minority attack with 21 b4 should be fine. After the pawn exchange (White's b-pawn for Black's c-pawn) I shall obtain a strong central majority. If I can advance it, I shall gain better chances all over the board, as a strong centre nearly always guarantees at least the initiative.

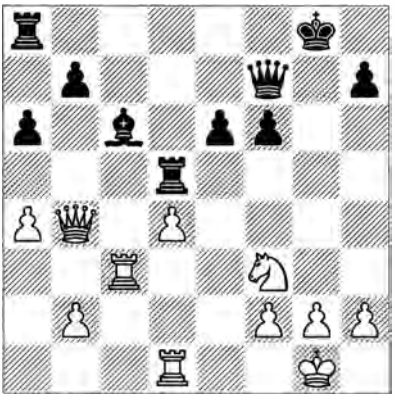
Test 48

Efstratios Grivas – Konstantinos Ignatiadis

Athens 2006

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 a6 5 a4 e6 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♗d3 ♗b4 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♗d2 dxc4 10 ♗xc4 c5 11 ♕e2 cxd4 12 exd4 ♕a5 13 ♖fd1 ♘b6 14 ♗b3 ♕h5 15 ♘e4 ♗xd2 16 ♘xf6+ gxf6 17 ♕xd2 ♖d8 18 ♕f4 ♘d5 19 ♗xd5 ♖xd5 20 ♕xf6 ♕g6 21 ♕e7 f6 22 ♖ac1 ♗d7 23 ♖c3 ♕f7 24 ♕b4 ♗c6 *(D)*

White to play



Judgement: White's energetic opening play was rewarded with a healthy extra pawn. Still, problems do exist and revolve around the issue of how to use or protect this pawn. Black's pieces are well-placed and ready to seek real compensation down the d- or g-file. A simple plan for Black is to double rooks on the d-file and then move his d5-rook to d6, in order to threaten ...♗xf3 or ...e5. Another interesting plan for Black is to double rooks on the g-file, creating attacking possibilities against the white king. So, White should be on the alert, as his extra pawn is of no great value at this particular moment, with so many pieces on the board.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: All my problems are caused by the bad placement of my knight. I should transfer it to c2 (and eventually to e3), from where it can protect my important extra d4-pawn without any danger of being exchanged. This manoeuvre also helps me cover the g-file with a potential ♖g3. In case of 25 ♘e1 ♖ad8 26 ♘c2 e5, then 27 ♖cd3 looks more than fine.

B: Exchanging pieces should be the right policy. A continuation like 25 ♖c5 ♖ad8 (25...♖xc5 26 dxc5 ♗xf3 27 gxf3 would be fine) 26 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 27 ♕c3 would improve my position, and active ideas like ♘d2-c4 and a5 come to mind.

C: As in Plan A, I should transfer my knight to a better square. That square is b3, from where my knight will play both a defensive and an offensive role, as it can sometimes jump to c5, applying pressure on the opponent's b7- and e6-pawns. I shall play 25 ♘d2 ♖ad8 26 ♘b3, improving my position.

Test 49

Efstratios Grivas – Konstantinos Fragiadakis

Athens 2006

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 e5 4 ♘c3 d6 5 e4 g6 6 ♘f3 ♗g7 7 h3 0-0 8 g4 a6 9 ♗e3 b5 10 cxb5 axb5 11 ♗xb5 ♘xe4 12 ♘xe4 ♕a5+ 13 ♘c3 e4 14 ♘d2 ♗xc3 15 bxc3 ♕xb5 16 c4 ♕a5 17 ♗h6 ♖e8 18 ♕c2 ♕a3 19 ♔f1 f5 20 ♖e1 ♔f7 21 ♔g2 ♘d7 22 gxf5 gxf5 23 ♔h2 ♖g8 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: This is a fairly complicated position, in which every move is significant. White seems to have the upper hand, as Black's king looks quite vulnerable. The presence of opposite-coloured bishops helps the creation of attacking chances for both sides. However, at this particular moment, only White can benefit from this fact, as Black is still undeveloped and most of his pieces are far away from the white king, in contrast to the white pieces. As the position contains a lot of tactics, only the discovery of the right plan can produce a correct evaluation.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I need to use the open g-file as an avenue for attack and should thus fight for it with 24 ♖hg1. After the natural 24...♘e5 25 ♖xg8 ♔xg8 26 ♖g1+ ♘g6 27 ♗f4 ♖a6 28 ♕b1 I can claim some initiative, although the position remains very complicated.

B: I should act fairly quickly, as otherwise Black will be able to cover his weak points. The tempting sacrifice 24 ♘xe4 looks strong, as after 24...fxe4 25 ♕xe4 I cannot see any defence against my threats (e.g., 25...♘f6 26 ♕e7+ ♔g6 27 ♖hg1+ +– or 25...♘e5 26 ♕f4+ ♔e8 27 ♖xe5+ dxe5 28 ♕xe5+ ♔d8 29 ♕f6+ ♔d7 30 ♖e1 +–).

C: I should try to break down Black's central pawns and open lines for my pieces with the strong 24 f3. Combining ideas such as ♖e3, ♖hg1 and ♕d1 should give me great attacking possibilities. Of course, it is not easy to calculate all the possible variations and Black will always have counterplay, but it seems that this is the right track.

Test 50

Nikolaos Gavrilakis – Efstratios Grivas

Athens 2006

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 d6 3 f4 e6 4 ♘f3 ♘f6 5 d3 ♘c6 6 g3 ♗e7 7 ♗g2 0-0 8 0-0 ♖b8 9 h3 d5 10 e5 ♘d7 11 ♔h2 b5 12 d4 b4 13 ♘e2 ♗a6 14 ♖e1 *(D)*

Black to play

Judgement: At this early stage of the game, both players have already decided on their future fields of action. White will seek chances in the centre and on the kingside, while Black will have to make do with the remaining part of the board, the queenside. White has a small spatial advantage, mainly due to his e5-pawn, but in general Black should be happy with the opening's outcome. The position offers approximately even chances, and the player who thinks up and executes the more appropriate plans will come out on top. This is a difficult task, for both players!

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I should continue the pressure in the centre with 14...♕b6, connecting my rooks at the same time. At a favourable moment I can open the c-file, before or after ...♖fc8. I have the feeling that I already have something more serious on the queenside than White has on the kingside, so my chances cannot be worse.

B: I should clarify things immediately with 14...cxd4. After 15 ♘exd4 ♘xd4 16 ♘xd4 ♕b6 17 ♗e3 ♗c5 18 ♕d2 ♖fc8 my position will be more than fine, as I shall be able to create a quick initiative on the queenside. In the near future, doubling rooks on the c-file, putting the c2-pawn under pressure, will be my main objective, giving me some advantage.

C: In a position of a closed or semi-closed character, knights are usually more important than bishops. Therefore the exchange 14...♗xe2 seems good; in addition to the general reasoning in the previous sentence, there is the specific point that White cannot then establish a strong knight on the d4-square, while the black a-pawn is free to march (for example, all the way to a3, creating a hole on the c3-square). Play could go on along the lines of 15 ♖xe2 ♘xd4 16 ♘xd4 cxd4 17 ♕xd4 ♕b6.

Test 51

Eduard Gufeld – Lubomir Kavalek

Student Olympiad, Marianske Lazne 1962

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 ♗c5 4 c3 f5 5 d4 fxe4 6 ♘g5 ♗b6 7 d5 e3 8 ♘e4 ♕h4 9 ♕f3 ♘f6 10 ♘xf6+ gxf6 11 dxc6 exf2+ 12 ♔d1 dxc6 13 ♗e2 *(D)*

Black to play

Judgement: A romantic variation has given rise to a position that is very difficult to evaluate. Black sacrificed a piece for some compensation, which consists of better development, a weak white king and, most important of all, a passed, well-protected pawn on f2. None of these advantages can be called long-term, as they can be nullified by White given time. Thus, it is very important to keep up the pace and to take full advantage of these strategic pluses.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: As is well known, when there is an unprotected weak king in the centre of the board, queens must be retained. As White is threatening to exchange them on the h5-square, I should continue with 13...h5 14 ♘d2 ♗g4 15 ♕e4 0-0-0 16 ♔c2 f5 17 ♕c4 e4, when my advantage seems to be serious.

B: I think that, instead of losing time avoiding a queen exchange, it is preferable to develop the rest of my pieces and take full advantage of my pluses. Thus I should proceed with 13...♖g8 14 g3 (14 ♕h5+ ♕xh5 15 ♗xh5+ ♔e7 16 ♗f3 ♗f5 17 ♘d2 ♖ad8 ∓ and 14 ♔c2 e4 15 ♕h5+ ♕xh5 16 ♗xh5+ ♔e7 17 ♘d2 ♖xg2 18 ♖d1 ♖xh2 19 ♗e2 f1♕ 20 ♗xf1 e3 −+ are both of no help to White) 14...♗g4. I do not see how White will survive. An indicative variation might be 15 ♕xf2 0-0-0+ 16 ♘d2 ♗xf2 17 gxh4 ♗f5 18 ♖f1 ♖g2 19 ♗f3 ♖xh2 ∓.

C: Time is more important than anything else, so I should react as in the previous plan but with a different approach: 13...♗e6 14 ♕h5+ ♕xh5 15 ♗xh5+ ♔e7. I only need to place my rooks on the d- and g-files and then just push my central pawns.

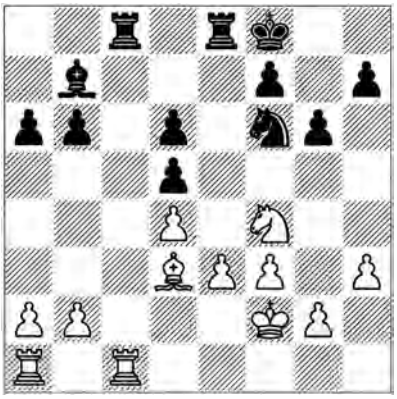
Test 52

Tony Miles – Bent Larsen

Tilburg 1978

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 c4 b6 4 ♗f4 ♗b7 5 e3 ♗e7 6 h3 0-0 7 ♘c3 d5 8 cxd5 exd5 9 ♗d3 ♘bd7 10 0-0 a6 11 ♘e5 ♖e8 12 ♕f3 ♗d6 13 ♘g4 ♘e4 14 ♗xd6 cxd6 15 ♖fc1 ♕g5 16 ♘e2 ♖ac8 17 ♕f4 ♕xf4 18 ♘xf4 g6 19 f3 ♘ef6 20 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 21 ♔f2 ♔f8 *(D)*

White to play



Judgement: In this endgame White holds a significant advantage. This is mainly based on Black's weak pawn-structure (the pawns on d6 and d5 are isolated, doubled and weak) and his better bishop (most of Black's pawns are on light squares). Of course, exploiting these advantages cannot be that easy; an appropriate and effective plan is called for. It is also important that White can torture Black for many moves, waiting for inaccuracies that can easily occur when one is constantly on the defensive.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: As I cannot ask for more on the queenside (at least for the time being), I should commence activity on the other side of the board, starting with 22 h4. Black must parry the threat of 23 h5 by playing 22...h5 himself, but this will immobilize his kingside pawns on light squares and will offer me an outpost for my knight on f4. Then I should proceed with ♗c2-b3 and try to invade with my king on the kingside, via the weakened dark squares.

B: I do not see much promise in any part of the board except the queenside. Therefore, I shall seek activity there with 22 b4!? (threatening a4-a5) 22...b5 23 ♖xc8 (23 a4 ♖xc1 24 ♖xc1 bxa4 25 ♖a1 ♗c6 26 ♗xa6 ♖b8 27 b5 ♗xb5 28 ♖b1 a3 =) 23...♖xc8 24 a4 bxa4 25 ♖xa4 ♖c6. My advantage looks secure and, by involving my king in the battle, I shall have every chance to win.

C: As in the first plan, I think that it is important to open up a second front on the kingside. This is best done with 22 g4. My idea is to continue with h4-h5, opening the h-file for one of my rooks. Then I can transfer my king to d2, preparing the typical ♗c2-b3. As Black cannot reply with 22...g5 in view of 23 ♘e2 followed by ♘g3-f5 and h4, he will have to stay passive and alert to all my threats, which could prove to be a hard task.

Test 53

Garry Kasparov – Ulf Andersson

Tilburg 1981

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 b6 4 a3 ♗b7 5 ♘c3 ♘e4 6 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 7 ♘d2 ♗g6 8 g3 ♘c6 9 e3 a6 10 b4 b5 11 cxb5 axb5 12 ♗b2 ♘a7 13 h4 h6 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: White seems to control more space and his pieces are better coordinated. Black has to solve not only his development problems, but also that of his a7-knight, which is really badly placed. However, if Black manages to regroup this piece to d6 (after ...c6 and ...d5) then his position will not be bad at all. While that is a lengthy plan, it places an onus on White to draw first blood, before it is too late. He is better but has to prove it.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I should not only think about my development, but at the same I must in keep in mind ways to interfere with my opponent's development too. I think that, by sacrificing the d-pawn with 14 d5 exd5 15 ♗g2 c6 16 0-0, I can succeed in keeping the black king in the centre for the time being. Black will have to create some weaknesses on the light squares around his king with ...f6, which can only be to my benefit. By opening the centre and the e-file with a well-timed e4 advance, I shall have more than enough compensation for my small investment. This is the way to go!

B: I should just proceed with my development. 14 ♗g2 d5 (14...c6 15 0-0 ♗e7 16 e4 would be excellent) 15 ♘b3 (even 15 e4 should be at least ±) 15...♗e7 16 0-0 0-0 is one line. In this position my supremacy on the queenside (and especially my outpost on the semi-open c-file) guarantees at least a slight but safe advantage.

C: I should combine development and activity on the semi-open c-file and the kingside, where Black seems to face grave problems. A continuation like 14 h5 ♗h7 15 ♕g4 d5 16 ♖c1 ♗f5 17 ♕f3 would allow me to take the initiative all over the board. Then I can decide on the most effective plan.

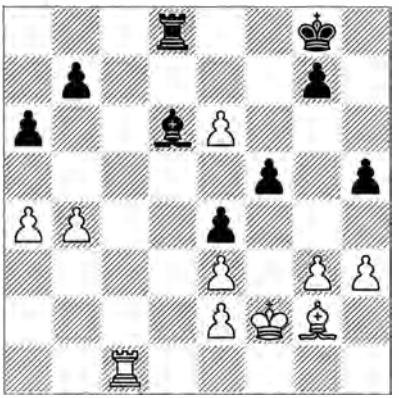
Test 54

Gennadi Sosonko – Bosko Abramović

New York 1986

1 d4 e6 2 c4 f5 3 g3 ♘f6 4 ♗g2 ♗b4+ 5 ♗d2 ♗e7 6 ♕b3 c6 7 d5 cxd5 8 cxd5 e5 9 ♘c3 d6 10 ♘f3 ♘bd7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♘g5 ♘c5 13 ♕c4 h6 14 b4 ♘cd7 15 ♘e6 ♘b6 16 ♕b3 ♗xe6 17 dxe6 d5 18 ♖fd1 ♕d6 19 ♘b5 ♕c6 20 a4 ♘c4 21 ♗e3 a6 22 ♘c3 ♘xe3 23 fxe3 e4 24 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 25 ♕xd5 ♕xd5 26 ♖xd5 h5 27 ♖c1 ♖ad8 28 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 29 ♔f2 ♗d6 30 h3 *(D)*

Black to play



Judgement: White is temporarily a pawn up, but it is almost certain that Black will be able to capture this pawn with ...♔f8-e7 sooner or later. The presence of opposite-coloured bishops is also important, as it can assist the drawing efforts of either side. Of course, the white bishop is not as active as its counterpart and it is not clear how it could be activated. Black has a lot of attractive continuations at his disposal, but not all of them can possibly be good. Overall, Black cannot stand worse and a lot depends on hitting upon the proper plan.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I shall just grab the offered b-pawn, as the white e6-pawn can wait. After 30...♗xb4 31 g4 g6 32 ♖c7 b5 33 axb5 axb5 34 gxf5 gxf5 I shall be on the right track, as I shall also later win White's e-pawn and be a pawn up. This endgame will offer me excellent winning chances.

B: I should calmly aim to recapture the pawn with 30...♔f8 31 g4 (what else?) 31...g6 (31...hxg4 32 hxg4 g6 33 gxf5 gxf5 34 ♖h1 would be only equal) 32 gxf5 gxf5 33 h4 ♔e7 34 ♗h3 ♔xe6 35 ♖g1 ♗e7, with reasonable chances. The possible continuation 36 ♖g6+ ♔e5 37 ♖h6 ♗xh4+ 38 ♔f1 ♖d1+ 39 ♔g2 ♖e1 40 ♖xh5 ♖xe2+ 41 ♔f1 ♖f2+ 42 ♔g1 ♗g3 ∓ could justify my train of thought.

C: There is no need to run after any of the white pawns yet. I should first focus on burying the g2-bishop in a golden cage. This can be best done in a textbook way: 30...g6 31 g4 h4. White's bishop will never re-emerge, allowing me to continue the battle effectively with an extra piece. After that I can think about my opponent's pawns!

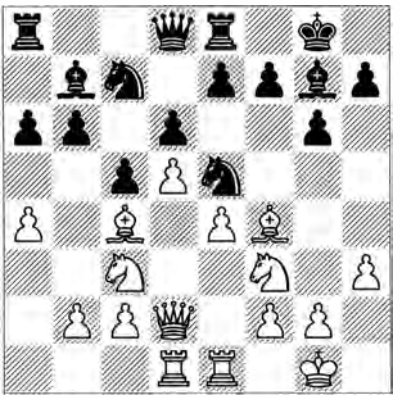
Test 55

Robert Zysk – Nigel Short

Bundesliga 1987/8

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 c5 3 d5 g6 4 ♘c3 ♗g7 5 e4 d6 6 ♗e2 0-0 7 0-0 ♘a6 8 ♗f4 ♘c7 9 a4 b6 10 ♖e1 ♖e8 11 h3 ♗b7 12 ♗c4 a6 13 ♕d2 ♘d7 14 ♖ad1 ♘e5 *(D)*

White to play



Judgement: A complicated position has arisen from a slightly unusual opening. By the way, this kind of opening is often used by stronger players trying for a win with the black pieces. And usually such a strategy contains some risk. Thus, in this position White can claim a slight plus, as he controls more space and his pieces are nicely centralized. As a matter of fact. Black's last move was more or less forced, since White was ready for a central e5 breakthrough. If Black, on the other hand, manages to free his pieces and obtain active counterplay on the queenside, he has every reason to count on a good result.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I think that I should keep the option of the e5 advance open. Therefore I must not take on e5. I shall retreat my c4-bishop to e2. After the sequence 15 ♗e2 ♘xf3+ 16 ♗xf3 I am ready for the e5 advance, which will grant me the advantage.

B: I think the optimal continuation is 15 ♘xe5 dxe5 (15...♗xe5 16 ♗xe5 dxe5 17 d6 exd6 18 ♕xd6 with a clear advantage due to the weak b6-pawn) 16 ♗h6 (16 ♗g5 ♕d6 looks OK for Black) 16...♕d6 (16...♗h8 17 d6 with a clear advantage) 17 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 18 f4, with a good game, as Black cannot take on f4 yet (18...exf4 19 e5 ♕d7 20 ♕xf4 ±).

C: I know that in blocked positions knights are more important than bishops. Tempi are valuable too, so I should play 15 ♗xe5 dxe5 (15...♗xe5 16 ♘xe5 dxe5 17 d6 would be even better for me) 16 d6 exd6 17 ♕xd6 (maybe I can try 17 ♘g5) 17...♘e6 18 ♗xe6 fxe6 19 a5 ♕xd6 20 ♖xd6 b5 21 ♘g5 ♗c8 22 ♖ed1, where my advantage should be serious.

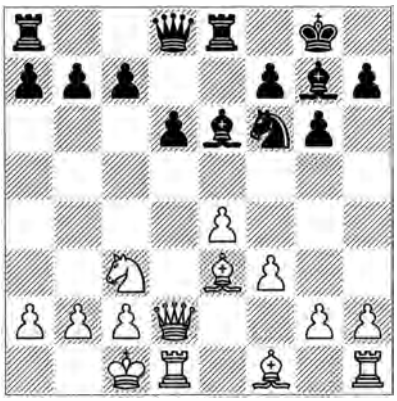
Test 56

Alexander Chernin – Gennadi Zaichik

Lvov 1987

1 d4 d6 2 e4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 g6 4 ♗e3 ♗g7 5 ♕d2 0-0 6 0-0-0 ♘c6 7 f3 e5 8 ♘ge2 exd4 9 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 10 ♗xd4 ♗e6 11 ♗e3 ♖e8 *(D)*

White to play



Judgement: This is a typical middlegame with opposite-side castling, where each tempo is valuable and can prove decisive. Both sides are ready to set their attacks in motion, starting with the usual pawn-storms on the flank where each side's target (the enemy king) is situated. White controls more space due to his e4-pawn, which means that he can transfer his pieces where necessary with greater ease. On the other hand, he still needs to finish his development. I would prefer White.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I am thinking about the typical g4 and h4 pawn avalanche, to open some lines around my opponent's king. But Black might go ...h5 at a certain moment, slowing down my play. Maybe I should stop that by playing 12 ♗h6 first. Then, as Black should avoid the exchange of his main defensive and offensive piece, his dark-squared bishop, he should continue with 12...♗h8. After that I can proceed with 13 g4 ♘d7 14 h4 ♕f6 15 ♗e2 ♗xa2 16 h5, obtaining a fierce attack.

B: Black's attack with an eventual ...a6 and ...b5 advance does not look dangerous, so his attack should consist of the moves ...c6, ...b5 and ...♕a5. First of all, I should calmly stop this counterplay with 12 ♗g5. Black must react with 12...♕e7 (12...c6 13 e5! {13 ♕xd6?! ♕a5 gives Black compensation} 13...dxe5 14 ♕xd8 ♖axd8 15 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 16 ♘e4 ±), but then after 13 g4 I should be on top.

C: I notice that my f1-bishop does not yet have a reasonable square or, to put it differently, I cannot see yet where it will be needed. Also, I must keep in mind that tempi really count in such positions, so I must not waste any time and opt for a direct attack with 12 g4. Black should sacrifice a pawn for a counterattack with 12...c6, but after 13 ♕xd6 ♕a5 14 ♕c5 I should be on the right track to convert my advantage into victory.

Test 57

Miso Cebalo – Daniel Campora

Berne 1988

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 dxc4 5 a4 ♗f5 6 e3 e6 7 ♗xc4 ♗b4 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♘h4 ♘bd7 10 f3 ♗g6 11 ♘xg6 hxg6 12 e4 e5 13 ♗e3 ♕b6 14 ♔h1 a5 15 f4 exd4 16 ♗xd4 ♗c5 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: The pawn-structure is unbalanced and both sides can boast a pawn-majority. As usual, the side that can put its majority to more effective use will gain the advantage. In this particular position it can only be White, as his rolling e- and f-pawns seem unstoppable (compare the pawns on e4 and c6). Another plus for White is his strong c4-bishop and the bad placement of Black's king, as it cannot seek cover on the semi-open h-file after the dangerous e5-e6 advance. White holds the advantage.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: Time is valuable so I should proceed immediately with 17 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 18 e5. My majority starts advancing effectively and the presence of opposite-coloured bishops can only be of help in a future attack against the black king. Black might play 18...♕xb2 19 ♖c1 ♖ad8 20 ♕f3, with an advantage for me.

B: Black's c5-bishop is not really a strong piece, thus I should avoid exchanging it. The only way to do so is by 17 ♗e5. This, of course, temporarily blocks my majority, but it gives me time to regroup my pieces before commencing the final assault. Black should play 17...♖fe8 (17...♕xb2 18 ♖b1 +– or 17...♘xe5 18 fxe5 ♘h7 19 e6 ±) 18 ♕f3 ♘xe5 19 fxe5 ♖xe5 20 ♕g3, when White has many threats (♕xe5, ♕xg6, ♖xf6).

C: White cannot afford to waste much time and so 17 ♗xc5 seems to be the only natural move. After 17...♘xc5 (17...♕xc5 18 ♗a2 ♖ad8 19 ♕f3 ♘b6 20 e5 ♘fd5 21 ♘e4 ♕e7 22 ♕h3 ± must be even worse) 18 ♕e2 ♖ad8 19 e5 ♘d5 20 ♖ad1 ♘xc3 21 bxc3 ♖xd1 22 ♖xd1 ♖d8 23 ♖e1 I think that I hold the advantage.

Test 58

Efim Geller – John Fedorowicz

New York 1990

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 e5 6 ♘db5 d6 7 ♗g5 a6 8 ♘a3 b5 9 ♗xf6 gxf6 10 ♘d5 ♗g7 11 c3 f5 12 exf5 ♗xf5 13 ♘c2 ♗e6 14 ♘ce3 ♘e7 15 g3 ♘xd5 16 ♘xd5 0-0 17 ♗g2 a5 18 0-0 ♖b8 19 ♕h5 ♔h8 20 ♖ad1 f5 21 ♖d2 ♕d7 22 ♖fd1 ♕f7 23 ♕h4 e4 24 ♘f4 ♗e5 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: Both sides have developed harmoniously, in line with their opening choice. White's pawn-structure is healthier, but this is very common in the Sveshnikov Sicilian. White can also boast of a strongly-placed knight on f4, which helps both in the centre and a possible future attack against the black king. Black does not stand so badly either, as his bishop-pair and his potential activity on the queenside (...b4) can compensate for his problems. This position offers roughly equal chances.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: There's not much that I can do to improve my position. On the other hand, my a2-pawn is hanging and protecting it with 25 a3 wouldn't be that nice after 25...♗b3. Therefore, I must eliminate the dangerous e6-bishop with 25 ♘xe6 ♕xe6. A possible continuation is 26 f4 ♗g7 27 ♖xd6 ♕xa2 28 ♖d7 b4 and, if I want, I can secure the draw with 29 ♖xg7 ♔xg7 30 ♖d7+ ♖f7 31 ♕g5+ ♔h8 32 ♖d8+.

B: An interesting idea is to activate my passive g2-bishop. This can be done with 25 f3 e3 (25...exf3 26 ♘xe6 ♕xe6 27 ♗xf3 b4 28 c4 ±) 26 ♖e2 ♗xa2 27 ♖xe3. In this position I believe that my chances should be superior, due to my better pawn-structure.

C: As all my forces are placed almost optimally, I think that some drastic measures should be taken. An exchange sacrifice with 25 ♖xd6 ♗xd6 26 ♖xd6 should offer me what I am seeking: a pawn, occupation of the d-file, well-placed pieces for an attack on the black king and – the most important of all – the initiative.

Test 59

Ian Rogers – Gilberto Milos

Olympiad, Manila 1992

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d6 3 ♘c3 ♗g4 4 e4 e6 5 h3 ♗h5 6 ♕e2 c6 7 g4 ♗g6 8 ♗g5 ♗e7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 h4 h6 11 0-0-0 ♘d7 12 ♔b1 ♕c7 13 ♖g1 h5 14 g5 ♗e7 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: Both sides have more or less developed harmoniously. White controls more space and can boast a strong centre, factors that allow him to claim a slight advantage. Black seems to be a little bit cramped, but he has no pawn weaknesses or any other serious disadvantage. He might even take advantage of his bishop-pair if the centre opens up. In the meantime, White can feel safe, as in such positions knights usually prove more effective.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I think I should try to exchange the light-squared bishops, depriving Black of the bishop-pair. This could prove significant if in the future the position opens up. So, I should play 15 e5 d5 16 ♕e3 0-0 17 ♗d3, retaining a small but secure spatial advantage, as my knight is not a worse piece than the e7-bishop.

B: I think it wouldn't be advisable to touch my valuable centre. Instead, I should try to reinforce it by advancing my f-pawn, creating threats such as an eventual f5. Also, I must think about the future placement of my f1-bishop, which could be placed on d3. So, with 15 ♕e3 0-0 16 ♘d2 d5 (forced; otherwise ♗d3 and f4-f5) 17 f4 dxe4 18 ♘dxe4 and ♗d3 to come, I can preserve a pleasant spatial advantage.

C: My first thought must be how to bury my opponent's dark-squared bishop, emphasizing the superiority of my knights. A path towards that direction is 15 d5 e5 16 ♗h3 0-0-0 17 ♘d2. Black's bishop-pair does not seem able to participate actively in the battle. Meanwhile, my knights can find excellent outposts. Later on, I can even transfer my rooks to the queenside, inviting Black to move his c-pawn to c5. After that, his bishops will be shut out of the game, allowing my knights supremacy.

Test 60

Anatoly Karpov – Valery Salov

Linares 1993

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 b6 4 g3 ♗b7 5 ♗g2 ♗e7 6 ♘c3 ♘e4 7 ♗d2 ♗f6 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♖c1 c5 10 d5 exd5 11 cxd5 ♘xd2 12 ♘xd2 d6 13 ♘de4 ♗e7 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: White has emerged from the opening with a somewhat more pleasant position. His pieces are well centralized and it seems that his kingside pawn-majority could prove more flexible than Black's on the queenside. Black also faces some problems with his b7-bishop, which is 'biting on granite', and generally his position is a little bit cramped. But we can hardly say that White has more than a slight advantage, as Black has no real weaknesses.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: My pieces are standing well, so I think that my pawns should carry the day from now on. Seizing control of the queenside seems to be a logical course, as in many positions of this type. I shall try to get a b4 advance in, followed by bxc5, with the purpose of either getting the c4-square for one of my knights (after ...bxc5) or obtaining a mobile central pawn-majority (after ...dxc5). Thus, a good plan should consist of 14 a3 ♘d7 15 b4 f5 16 bxc5 ♘xc5 17 ♘xc5 bxc5 18 ♖b1, with ♕a4 to follow.

B: I do not see anything real on the queenside, as my pawn-majority is on the other side of the board. Playing actively on the kingside with 14 f4 ♘d7 15 g4 a6 16 a4 must be the right path to an advantage. My e4-knight will never be kicked away and I can calmly prepare an assault via the g-file, with an eventual g5, ♔h1 and ♖g1. I do not think that Black can create counterplay easily, so for the time being I can safely proceed with my plan.

C: There is no immediate need to advance any pawns, but I think that I can improve the placement of my major pieces. A continuation like 14 ♕d3 f5 (14...♘d7 15 f4 ♘f6 16 a4 ±) 15 ♘d2 ♘d7 16 f4 ♕e8 17 a4 a6 18 e4 should give me the advantage, as Black has weakened some important squares, such as e6.

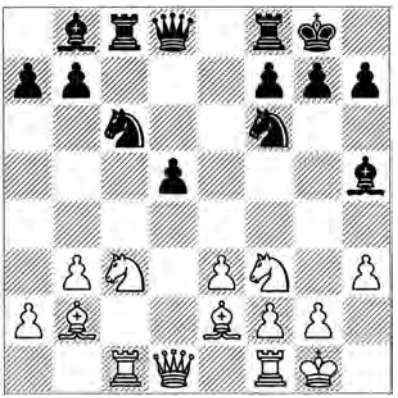
Test 61

Yasser Seirawan – Nick de Firmian

USA Ch, Key West 1994

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 c5 4 e3 d5 5 ♘c3 ♘c6 6 cxd5 exd5 7 ♗b5 ♗d6 8 0-0 0-0 9 dxc5 ♗xc5 10 b3 ♗g4 11 ♗b2 ♖c8 12 ♖c1 ♗d6 13 h3 ♗h5 14 ♗e2 ♗b8 *(D)*

White to play



Judgement: This is a typical middlegame with an isolated d-pawn, with its good and bad sides, examined in every textbook on this subject. White would like to exchange some pieces and reach an endgame, where the isolated pawn's weak side would be thrust into sharp relief. On the other hand, Black should not agree to such a turn of events, preferring a complicated middlegame, where his active and well-placed pieces will fully meet the position's needs. So, both sides already know what is to be done and what should be avoided, and must find a way to enforce their wishes.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: As exchanges generally suit me, I should try to execute some! Starting with 15 ♘d4 ♕d6 16 g3 ♗g6 (16...♗xe2 17 ♘cxe2 would rather favour me) 17 a3 ♖fe8 18 ♗f3, I shall have improved the placement of my pieces, retaining my slight opening advantage.

B: Well, exchanges must be good, but Black would not be that cooperative! But I think that I can force Black to help me a bit with the strange (for such positions) 15 ♘h4. Black can play 15...♕d6 (15...♗xe2 16 ♘xe2 ♘e4 17 ♘f5 would be rather pleasant), but after 16 g3 ♗xe2 (16...♗g6 17 ♘xg6 hxg6 18 ♗f3 ♖fd8 19 ♗g2 would increase my advantage) 17 ♘xe2 ♘e7 18 ♕d3 I think I have succeeded in my main idea, retaining a very small, though pleasant, advantage.

C: For the time being it is not so easy to exchange any pieces, as Black would not willingly co-operate. Therefore, I should strengthen my d4 outpost, which is of great significance in every such position and probably more important than the isolated pawn itself. A continuation like 15 ♘b5 ♘e4 16 ♘bd4 ♕d7 17 a3 would therefore be appropriate. Later I can even try to reach a position with hanging pawns (by means of b4 and ♘xc6).

Test 62

Walter Browne – Joseph Bradford

Dallas 1996

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 b6 4 g3 ♗a6 5 ♘bd2 c5 6 ♗g2 ♗b7 7 e4 cxd4 8 0-0 d6 9 ♘xd4 ♘bd7 10 ♖e1 ♕c7 11 ♘b5 ♕b8 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: This is a typical Hedgehog position, where both sides have not yet completed their development. Both need approximately two moves to do so. White will either develop his dark-squared bishop on the long diagonal, or move his d2-knight and develop it on e3, f4 or g5. Black needs to play ...♗e7 and ...0-0 (after playing ...a6 to kick the annoying b5-knight away). At the moment Black must feel somewhat less comfortable, because his lack of development directly affects his king's safety, but White needs to be on the alert, as the position is of a dynamic nature.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I think I can play actively on the queenside and create some structural weaknesses in Black's camp. A continuation like 12 a4 a6 13 ♘d4 ♕c7 14 a5 bxa5 15 ♕a4 ♗e7 16 ♘2b3 would allow me to gain the initiative on this side of the board and safely try to increase my advantage.

B: As I am not able to benefit from the presence of my opponent's king in the centre (my pieces are not that active), I should calmly complete my development, while gaining control over the central squares. I should proceed with 12 f4 a6 13 ♘d4 ♗e7 14 b3 0-0 15 ♗b2. I think that my healthy spatial advantage plus central occupation will give me a more pleasant middlegame.

C: I think I should try to benefit from the black king's presence in the centre – although my pieces are not that close to my target and my idea might be more fantasy than reality. But maybe I can play 12 c5, sacrificing a pawn to gain important squares and time. Black will have to accept this pawn sacrifice and can do so in three ways. In any case I shall proceed with 13 ♘c4 and ♗f4 or f4, controlling the d6-square and obtaining a dangerous initiative.

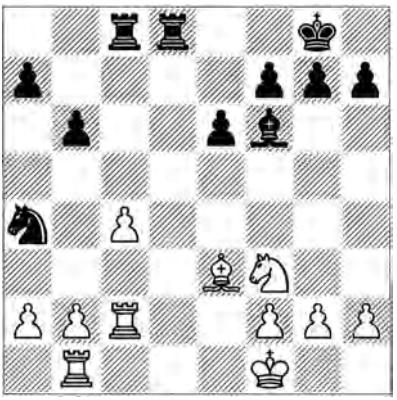
Test 63

Sergio Slipak – Zoltan Almasi

Buenos Aires 1996

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 e3 b6 4 ♗d3 ♗b7 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 c4 0-0 7 ♘c3 d5 8 ♕e2 ♘bd7 9 e4 dxe4 10 ♘xe4 c5 11 dxc5 ♗xe4 12 ♗xe4 ♘xe4 13 ♕xe4 ♘xc5 14 ♕e2 ♕d3 15 ♖e1 ♗f6 16 ♗e3 ♖fd8 17 ♖ab1 ♕xe2 18 ♖xe2 ♘a4 19 ♔f1 ♖ac8 20 ♖c2 *(D)*

Black to play



Judgement: Black has the better ending due to his pressure on White's queenside and occupation of the d-file. All his pieces are working at maximum capacity. However, White might be able to hold on as he has no static weaknesses, either in his pawn-structure or in his piece placement. Therefore, to put his short-term advantage to use, Black needs to construct a concrete and effective plan to turn it into a long-term one and then convert it into victory.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: There is nothing decisive I can do in this position. As in every endgame, it is important to use the power of my king, starting with 20...♔f8. White might play 21 b3 ♘c5 22 ♔e2 ♘e4 23 ♖bc1 ♗e7, when I can preserve my advantage and slowly improve my king's position.

B: I think it is quite important to create some long-term weaknesses in White's pawn-structure, as then my advantage would be stabilized. This can only be achieved on the queenside, where White's c-pawn can become my target. Starting with 20...b5 21 b3 ♘b6 22 ♖bc1 bxc4 23 bxc4 ♔f8, I have succeeded in isolating his c-pawn. Of course, this pawn is also passed, but it cannot go far; I can easily blockade it and attack it. My king will prove quite useful for this purpose.

C: I think I can convert my slight short-term advantage into a serious, long-term one by exchanging two pieces for a rook and two pawns. The continuation 20...♘xb2 21 ♖cxb2 ♗xb2 22 ♖xb2 ♖xc4 will bring about a position in which I can easily create a passed pawn on the queenside, while White will be deprived of any serious counterplay with his minor pieces.

Test 64

Suat Atalik – Nikolai Andrianov

Honolulu 1997

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 c6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 ♘f3 g6 5 ♗g5 ♗g7 6 e3 0-0 7 ♗d3 dxc4 8 ♗xc4 ♗g4 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 h3 ♗xf3 11 ♕xf3 ♘d7 12 0-0 c5 13 ♖ad1 cxd4 14 exd4 ♖c8 15 ♗b3 ♖c6 16 ♖fe1 ♘b6 17 d5 ♖c7 18 ♘b5 ♖d7 19 ♘xa7 ♗xb2 20 ♘b5 ♘c8 21 ♘d4 ♘d6 22 ♖e2 ♗xd4 23 ♖xd4 ♕b6 24 ♖d1 ♖c7 25 ♕f4 ♘f5 26 g4 ♕d6 27 ♕g5 h6 28 ♕d2 ♘h4 29 ♕xh6 ♕f6 30 ♖e3 ♖fc8 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: Black has sacrificed a pawn in order to gain the initiative. True, Black's forces are well placed and seem to cooperate harmoniously. His queen and knight are attacking the weakened white king and his rooks are ready to invade on either c3 or c1. Black must have enough compensation for his small material investment – or does he? White seems to have a lot of resources: the reduced material is to his benefit and, by suitable regrouping, he can hope for success.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: As Black's threats might prove lethal, it is time for drastic measures. I should immediately try to generate some threats myself, in order to extinguish Black's initiative. 31 d6 seems to be a good idea. After the forced 31...exd6 32 ♖ed3 my threats become dangerous, thanks to my strong b3-bishop and the pressure down the d-file.

B: As I am material ahead, I should try to defend against Black's threats and then win the endgame. I should first cover my back rank (the c1-square) with 31 ♖ed3, which opens the diagonal of my queen towards that square. Then my queen can also return to e3, from where it can eliminate Black's threats.

C: I think it is most important to exchange queens, as then Black's initiative will be reduced. A continuation like 31 f4 (with the idea 32 ♕g5) 31...♖c1 32 ♖xc1 ♖xc1+ 33 ♔f2 wouldn't be bad, as my e3-rook can cover my king if needed, and then I can calmly play the desired ♕g5.

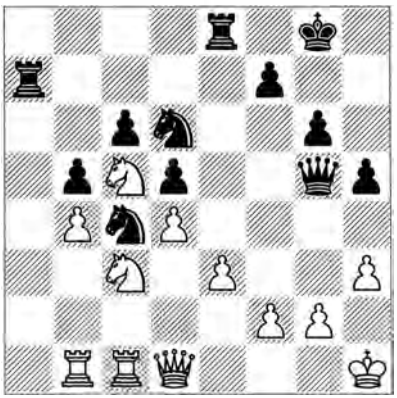
Test 65

Predrag Nikolić – Vladimir Kramnik

Amber blindfold, Monaco 1998

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 c6 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♗g5 ♗e7 7 e3 ♗f5 8 ♗d3 ♗xd3 9 ♕xd3 ♘bd7 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♖ab1 a5 12 a3 ♘e4 13 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 14 b4 b5 15 ♕c2 axb4 16 axb4 ♘d6 17 ♖b3 ♘b6 18 ♘e5 ♖fc8 19 ♘d3 ♘bc4 20 ♘c5 ♖e8 21 h3 g6 22 ♖c1 ♖a7 23 ♕d1 h5 24 ♔h1 ♕g5 25 ♖bb1 *(D)*

Black to play



Judgement: It's quite clear that something went wrong for White in the middlegame. He succeeded neither in his minority attack, which Black managed to halt, nor in a central break. Black's reactions were excellent and, as a result, he has taken over the a-file and has placed his knights on excellent central squares. Black has a great advantage, but no position can be won by just sitting back and waiting – a typical mistake that we can see in a lot of games. Achieving a huge advantage only means that we have excellent chances of winning, not that we have already won! Black must form a plan to convert his advantage into victory.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I should double my rooks on the a-file with 25...♖ea8, strengthening my domination of this file. White might go 26 ♖a1, but then with 26...♖a3 I should preserve my advantage. Later I can even triple on the a-file with ...♖8a7 and ...♕d8-a8.

B: I think I should move my knights towards the black king, to combine my a-file occupation with an attack on the white king. I shall start with my d6-knight: 25...♘f5 26 ♖a1 ♖xa1 27 ♖xa1 ♘h4.

C: I think I cannot expect much from the a-file. The real target is the white king and I should transfer my forces towards it. Doubling rooks on the e-file and sacrificing a knight on e3 must be seriously considered, although this is hardly a standard plan in such positions. But 25...♖ae7 26 ♖a1 ♘f5 27 ♖a2 ♘cxe3 28 fxe3 ♖xe3 must be powerful, and it will break down White's defence.

Test 66

Sergei Shipov – Tony Miles

Hastings 1998/9

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♗xc4 c5 6 0-0 a6 7 ♗b3 b6 8 e4 cxd4 9 e5 ♘fd7 10 ♕xd4 ♗b7 11 ♕f4 ♘c5 12 ♘c3 ♘xb3 13 axb3 ♗e7 14 ♕g3 ♔f8 15 ♖d1 ♘d7 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: Black's opening experiment has not brought him any joy. His king has lost the right to castle, his rooks will find it hard to get connected, and his pieces are bunched up on his first two ranks. On the other hand, he can argue that he obtained the bishop-pair, but this is hardly sufficient compensation for all the downsides of his position. For the time being, White must decide on how to complete his development and how to create an attack against the black king.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I should complete my development, bringing my c1-bishop to the excellent f4-square. Then I can place my rooks in the centre, either on the c- and d-files, or both on the d-file. A continuation like 16 ♗f4 h6 17 h4 g6 18 ♖ac1 (18 ♖d2 and ♖ad1 is another option) would preserve and even increase my advantage.

B: As the bishop-pair is my opponent's main trump, I should exchange one of them, at the same time completing my development. I can achieve this with 16 ♗g5 h6 17 ♗xe7+ ♕xe7. Then, by regrouping my knight with 18 ♘d2 to the c4- or e4-square, I would be able to transfer it to the important d6-square.

C: As my advantage depends mostly on the bad placement of the opponent's king, I should not exchange any pieces and instead focus on a direct attack. For this purpose I need more pieces transferred to the kingside and the first candidate must be my a1-rook. This rook has no real targets on the semi-open a-file, but I think that with ♖a4-g4 it could become more useful. So, 16 ♖a4 ♕e8 (17 ♖ad4 was a threat) 17 ♖g4 seems pleasant.

Test 67

Rustem Dautov – Judit Polgar

Olympiad, Istanbul 2000

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 b6 4 g3 ♗a6 5 ♕a4 ♗b7 6 ♗g2 c5 7 dxc5 ♗xc5 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♘c3 ♘e4 10 ♕c2 ♘xc3 11 ♕xc3 d5 12 ♖d1 ♘d7 13 ♗g5 ♕e8 14 cxd5 ♗xd5 15 b4 ♗e7 16 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 17 ♖ac1 ♖fd8 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: After some typical exchanges, it seems that there is not much White can expect from his position. But a careful examination proves that White stands slightly better. This is mainly due to his better control of the c-file and the possibility of invading the 7th rank. Also, we must not ignore the fact that it is White to move and that Black lacks any active plan. This is the kind of position where White can feel safe and, even if his slight advantage evaporates, he will face nothing worse than a likely draw.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I should take my chances and immediately invade the 7th rank. With 18 ♕c7 I am threatening e4 and ♘e5 or just ♘e5, so Black must accept my pawn sacrifice with 18...♕xb4, unpinning his knight. Then I can play 19 ♘d4 ♗xg2 20 ♔xg2, with strong threats like 21 ♘c6. I think my compensation for the pawn will be more than excellent.

B: I believe that in this type of set-up, White has only one strategic idea, but a very powerful one: bringing the knight to the c6-square, from where, protected by my pawn on b5, it can have a paralysing effect on Black's position. So, I should proceed with 18 ♘d4 ♘f6 (18...♗xg2 19 ♔xg2 is even worse for Black) 19 b5 ♗xg2 20 ♔xg2 ♖d5 21 ♘c6. My plan has been accomplished, giving me a pleasant and secure advantage.

C: The occupation of the c-file is fine and I do not need to be in a hurry to exploit it, as Black cannot do much. Invading the 7th rank looks fine, but I should first protect my b-pawn with 18 a3. Black should reply 18...♘f6 (18...a5 19 ♕c7 axb4 20 ♘e5 ±) 19 ♘e5 ♗xg2 20 ♔xg2 ♖xd1 21 ♖xd1 ♘d5 22 ♕c6. My advantage looks adequate to claim the full point in this endgame.

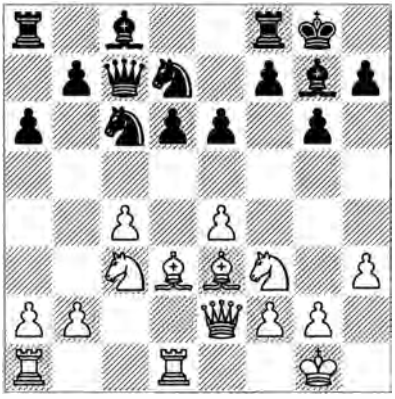
Test 68

Zoltan Almasi – Josif Dorfman

Austrian Team Ch 2002/3

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 a6 5 ♗d3 ♘f6 6 0-0 ♕c7 7 ♕e2 d6 8 c4 g6 9 ♘c3 ♗g7 10 ♖d1 0-0 11 ♘f3 ♘c6 12 h3 ♘d7 13 ♗e3 *(D)*

Black to play



Judgement: A Hedgehog-type position has been reached. As usual in this structure, White enjoys a spatial advantage and in general can feel free to employ plans all over the board. On the other hand, Black controls important central squares, such as c5 and e5, but must first complete his development (notably the c8-bishop) to feel secure. His d6-pawn is a potential target for White's forces, but attacking it is not a simple task. It is probably more important for White to keep Black's possible breaks ...b5 and ...d5 under control. In general, White holds a slight advantage, but this is not without risk and any inaccuracy can be fatal.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I think it is important to create some weakness in White's camp and focus my plans on it. This is the right moment to play 13...♗xc3 14 bxc3 f6 (14...♘c5 15 ♗h6 ♖d8 16 ♗g5 gives White too much play on the dark squares around my king). Later I can continue manoeuvring my knights (...e5, ...♘c5-e6, ...♘a5) around my targets, the white c-pawns. Of course, White will still have a spatial advantage and the bishop-pair.

B: As my 'main' pawn-breaks with ...b5 and ...d5 are under control by my opponent, I should focus on my only other possible break, which is ...f5. A continuation like 13...♘de5 14 ♖ac1 ♕e7 (14...♗d7 15 ♘e1 ♘b4 16 b3 f5 17 exf5 gxf5 18 ♗b1 ♘g6 19 ♘d3 ± is an alternative) 15 ♗b1 ♖b8 16 b3 ♖e8 does not look so bad, as I have created enough counterplay in the centre, where the battle will take place.

C: I think that my first concern should be to complete my development and connect my rooks. My c8-bishop should be placed on the long diagonal, to assist a potential ...d5 or ...f5 advance, when the time comes. So, 13...b6 14 ♖ac1 ♘c5 15 ♗b1 ♗b7 would perfectly suit my Hedgehog-type position.

Test 69

Alexander Graf – Artur Yusupov

German Ch, Saarbrücken 2002

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗b4 4 ♘f3 b6 5 ♗g5 ♗b7 6 e3 h6 7 ♗h4 g5 8 ♗g3 ♘e4 9 ♕c2 d6 10 ♗d3 ♗xc3+ 11 bxc3 ♘xg3 12 fxg3 ♘d7 13 0-0 ♕e7 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: This is a well-known variation of the Nimzo/Queen's Indian hybrid. White has accepted an inferior pawn-structure (a2, c4, c3, g3 and g2), which is compensated by a spatial advantage, the weakened black kingside and the semi-open f-file. Still, we must keep in mind that this kind of compensation cannot be considered long-term, in contrast to Black's advantage (better pawn-structure) which, under normal circumstances, will be an enduring plus. White must take full advantage of his pluses in order to retain a good game.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I do not think I can play actively on either flank before Black has decided where to castle. It is better to deprive my opponent of one of his pluses: his bishop is a strong piece, so I should exchange it with 14 ♗e4 ♗xe4 15 ♕xe4. After 15...0-0 16 ♕c6 I can put pressure on the weak light squares and the f-file with a future ♖f2 and ♖af1. This must give me an advantage.

B: I think that the f-file will be the most important part of the board for the rest of the game. So, I should immediately double rooks with 14 ♖f2. I should not be afraid of a quick 14...g4 15 ♘h4 or 14...f5 15 e4 f4 (15...fxe4 16 ♗xe4 0-0-0 17 ♖e1 ±) 16 gxf4 gxf4 17 e5 0-0-0 18 ♗e4, with a clear advantage in both lines. If my opponent plays 14...0-0, then I shall go ♖af1 and g4 with good play.

C: I think that first of all I should fix Black's kingside with 14 g4. As now he cannot play ...f5 or ...g4 any more, I shall be able to double rooks on the f-file, putting the f7-pawn under pressure. As I cannot see any counterplay by my opponent coming, I think that I could obtain a slight but permanent plus.

Test 70

Michal Krasenkow – Konstantin Sakaev

Copenhagen 2003

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 b6 4 ♘c3 ♗b7 5 a3 d5 6 cxd5 ♘xd5 7 ♕c2 ♘xc3 8 bxc3 ♗e7 9 e4 0-0 10 ♗d3 c5 11 0-0 ♕c8 12 ♕e2 ♗a6 13 ♖d1 ♗xd3 14 ♖xd3 ♘d7 15 e5 ♕c6 16 ♗g5 ♖ae8 17 ♖ad1 f6 18 exf6 ♗xf6 19 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 20 ♘e5 ♕c7 21 c4 cxd4 22 ♖xd4 ♖d8 23 ♕e3 ♖xd4 24 ♕xd4 ♖c8 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: Both sides have damaged pawn-structures. White's a- and c-pawns are isolated and weak, as is Black's e-pawn. On the other hand, it is not easy for either side to attack these weaknesses, at least for the time being. But the most important strategic element in this position is the strong centralized e5-knight which, in imperial style, lies on a commanding outpost. This knight is the strength of White's position and deprives Black of any counterplay. White's occupation of the open d-file is important, as at any favourable moment he can enter on the 6th or 7th rank. White holds the advantage, but only an appropriate plan can prove its true extent.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: As I cannot achieve anything on the queenside or in the centre, I should focus on the kingside. Maybe I could advance my kingside pawns with 25 g4 h6 26 h4, creating activity on this flank, gaining space and kicking the f6-knight away. Importantly, I cannot see how Black can benefit from my king's voluntary weakening.

B: Exchanging queens would allow me to attack the black pawns more easily. A continuation like 25 ♕d6 ♕xd6 26 ♖xd6 ♘e4 27 ♖d4 (27 ♖xe6 ♘d2) 27...♘c5 28 f4 looks good and should preserve my advantage.

C: I should get rid of at least one of my weaknesses, and this can be done with 25 a4 ♖f8 26 f3 ♘e8 (26...♕c5 27 ♕xc5 bxc5 28 ♖d6 ±) 27 a5 bxa5 28 c5. The two doubled black a-pawns are hardly worth more than one and can be easily blocked, but my passed c-pawn may turn into a monster, securing my advantage.

Test 71

Penteala Harikrishna – Enamul Hossain

British Ch, Edinburgh 2003

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 a6 3 ♘f3 e6 4 g3 b5 5 ♗g2 ♗b7 6 d3 d6 7 0-0 ♘f6 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: It is rather early to give a firm evaluation of the position. White has not shown any great opening ambition, preferring just to develop his forces peacefully, waiting for the appropriate moment to undertake action. Some top players, when facing weaker opponents, do not wish to have a theoretical opening discussion, where they might face some extremely strong novelty, but instead prefer quiet openings and sharper middlegames, where their class will make the difference. So far, both sides have developed quietly. Good planning from this point on will be of great influence.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I do not think I can become active either in the centre or on the kingside. So, the only side of the board where I could develop an initiative is the queenside. A b4 advance looks like a nice plan, trying to exchange a black central pawn. This can best be done with 8 ♖b1 ♘bd7 9 a3 ♗e7 10 b4. Later I can even try a4, which will further weaken Black's queenside pawns and turn them into targets.

B: I cannot ask for a great deal from my position, but I believe I can get good prospects with the early 8 e5. After 8...dxe5 9 ♘xe5 ♗xg2 10 ♔xg2 I think I have an advantage. My queen will be placed on the influential h1-a8 diagonal, the a4 break will soon come and, in the meantime, Black must spend some tempi in order to castle.

C: I think I should gain some space on the kingside, like in many typical variations of the English Opening (with reversed colours). For this purpose I should use my f-pawn, and later even my g- and h-pawns. A continuation like 8 ♘h4 ♘c6 (8...♗e7 9 e5 ±) 9 f4 ♗e7 10 f5 looks pleasant and gives me some initiative, guaranteeing a tiny opening advantage.

Test 72

Boris Gelfand – Alexander Grishchuk

Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2004

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 c5 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♘f3 ♘c6 6 g3 ♘f6 7 ♗g2 ♗e7 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♗g5 c4 10 ♘e5 ♗e6 11 b3 ♕a5 12 ♕d2 ♖ad8 13 bxc4 ♗b4 14 ♘xc6 bxc6 15 ♖fc1 dxc4 16 ♗xf6 gxf6 17 e3 c5 18 d5 ♗xc3 19 ♖xc3 ♗xd5 20 ♗xd5 ♖xd5 21 ♕c2 ♖c8 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: White has emerged from the opening with a much better pawn-structure. All of Black's pawns are weak and isolated and they are potential targets for White's forces. Black's c-pawns are passed, but in reality they are weak, having been firmly blockaded. Sooner or later a four-rook endgame will appear on the board. Without the queen side pawns this would be a draw, but of course this can only be a dream for Black. If White manages to win the c- and f-pawns in return for his a-pawn, then he would have all the chances to win the game. In general, White does not wish to exchange any rooks and, if he manages to activate his second rook, all of Black's pawns will become accessible targets. Overall, White holds quite a healthy advantage.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I should just play the natural 22 ♖xc4, preparing 23 ♖c1. I should not be afraid of a queen exchange with 22...♕d2 23 ♖c1 (23 ♕e4 ♖cd8 threatening ...♕e2 and ...♖d1+ gives Black too much counterplay) 23...♕xc2 24 ♖1xc2, as then my king will be able to participate in the coming battle.

B: There is no hurry to win back the c4-pawn and I think there is also no point in exchanging queens this early. The simple 22 ♖c1 retains all my options and, if Black wrongly plays 22...♖d3 23 ♖xc4 ♕d2, I can safely win a pawn with the simple 24 ♖xc5.

C: My first concern should be to activate my second rook as quickly as possible. With 22 ♖b1 I shall be ready to enter the 7th or 8th rank and, by a well-timed ♕e4 or ♕f5 (of course after ♖xc4), my attack will be quite strong. The best idea is to combine pressure against the black c-pawn with an attack, posing a lot of problems.

Test 73

Spyridon Skembris – Hristodoulos Banikas

Kalamata 2005

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3 0-0 5 ♗g5 c5 6 d5 d6 7 e3 h6 8 ♗h4 e6 9 ♘d2 exd5 10 cxd5 b6 11 ♗c4 a6 12 a4 ♘bd7 13 0-0 ♖e8 14 e4 g5 15 ♗g3 ♘e5 16 ♖e1 ♘g6 17 ♗e2 ♖b8 18 h3 *(D)*

Black to play

Judgement: As is quite common in the Modern Benoni, a sharp middlegame has arisen. White seems to enjoy some spatial advantage and pressure against the black d6-pawn. He also has at his disposal the excellent c4 outpost for one of his knights. On the other hand, Black cannot feel unhappy either, as his pieces are actively placed. His ideas should consist of the future ...b5 and ...f5 advances, which are not yet easy to accomplish, and using his own outpost on e5, as his g5-pawn makes an f4 advance nearly impossible, or at least pointless. However, for the time being, Black has to deal with more concrete problems, such as how to defend against the coming ♘c4. This position should be evaluated as unclear, with rich possibilities for both sides.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: Covering my d6-pawn, but without diminishing my pieces' activity, must be my main concern. I would of course prefer to execute the manoeuvre ...♘d7-e5 but, as this is impossible (the d6-pawn is hanging after 18...♘d7), I should try the active 18...♘f4. True, my pawn-structure will be weakened after 19 ♗xf4 gxf4, but I shall gain as compensation the bishop-pair and better control of the dark squares.

B: The manoeuvre ...♘d7-e5 is quite important and, if I succeed in playing it, I shall gain the upper hand. I shall start with 18...♕c7 19 ♘c4 ♗f8, and I am ready for ...♘d7-e5. This looks a little bit slow, but my plan with ...♘d7-e5, ...♗g7 and ...f5 will give me excellent chances in the near future.

C: Immediately making use of my strong e5 outpost must be the only solution. After 18...♘e5 19 ♘c4 (what else?) 19...♘xc4 20 ♗xc4 I should manoeuvre my other knight to e5 with 20...♘h7 (and ...♘f8-g6-e5). This would allow me to retain a good game.

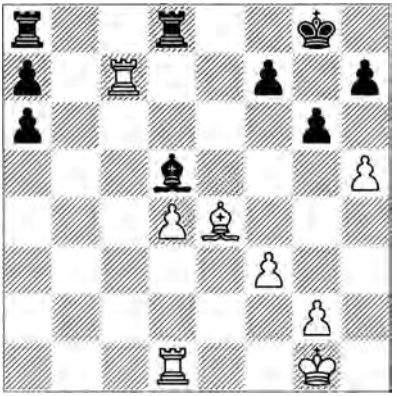
Test 74

Sergei Rublevsky – Alexander Motylev

Russian Ch, Moscow 2005

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 d4 ♘xe4 4 ♗d3 d5 5 ♘xe5 ♘d7 6 ♘xd7 ♗xd7 7 0-0 ♗d6 8 c4 c6 9 cxd5 cxd5 10 ♘c3 ♘xc3 11 bxc3 0-0 12 ♕h5 g6 13 ♕xd5 ♕c7 14 ♗h6 ♖fe8 15 h4 ♗e6 16 ♕f3 ♕xc3 17 ♕f6 ♗f8 18 ♗xf8 ♖xf8 19 ♖fd1 ♖fd8 20 ♗e4 ♗d5 21 ♖ac1 ♕a3 22 ♖c7 ♕xa2 23 h5 ♕e2 24 f3 ♕a6 25 ♕xa6 bxa6 *(D)*

White to play



Judgement: After a complicated middlegame (which was mostly home preparation!), an interesting endgame has arisen. Black's extra pawn is not important at all, as it is doubled and weak, while the 7th rank domination by the white rook is on the other hand very important. This endgame is rather unpleasant for Black, although of course not lost. The defence is extremely difficult, as White can apply pressure at will, without any real risk of losing. Such positions (reached with the assistance of modern technology) are bread and butter for the top players. With their home analysis and knowledge of what to do and how to do it, plus some class, the point is ready to fall into their hands!

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I think it would be nice to acquire a strong central pawn duo with 26 ♖c5 ♗xe4 27 fxe4. Then I can just bring my king to e3, protecting my pawns and allowing my rooks to be activated further. Probably Black has to continue with 27...♖ac8, but then after 28 ♖a5 (28 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 29 ♔f2 is an alternative) 28...♖c6 29 ♔f2 I should stand well.

B: All my pieces are well placed already and I do not need to improve them further. All, that is, except my king, which must play an important role, as in every endgame. So, I should continue with 26 ♔f2, centralizing it to protect my d4-pawn. Then my d1-rook could be moved to a more active square.

C: I think it is important to create back-rank threats with 26 h6. Black's king will not be easy to activate and I can calmly transfer mine to the centre. Although there seems to be nothing forced, my position should be dominating and my chances excellent.

Test 75

Veselin Topalov – Levon Aronian

Wijk aan Zee 2006

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 b6 4 g3 ♗a6 5 b3 ♗b4+ 6 ♗d2 ♗e7 7 ♗g2 c6 8 ♗c3 d5 9 ♘e5 ♘fd7 10 ♘xd7 ♘xd7 11 ♘d2 0-0 12 0-0 ♘f6 13 e4 b5 14 exd5 exd5 15 ♖e1 ♖b8 16 c5 ♗c8 17 ♘f3 ♘e4 *(D)*

White to play

Judgement: Both sides have achieved their aims, in a position which is quite hard to access. White can seek to attack the weak c6-pawn, but Black will not find it difficult to defend. Actually, his pride (the e4-knight) is difficult to remove without blocking the g2-bishop (with f3) and, with ideas like ...♗f6 and ...♗f5 he should in general feel fine. But White has not made any mistakes until now, so one might suspect that his position should be somewhat better (the tiny advantage that nearly every reasonable opening promises). This is the kind of position where only the discovery of the right plan can lead to the absolute truth about the position.

Planning: Choose one of the following three plans:

A: I do not think this the right time for complications, but for a long, manoeuvring game. I should of course first retain my bishop with 18 ♗b2, threatening 19 ♘e5. Then, after 18...♗f6 19 b4 ♗f5 20 a4 a6 21 ♘d2, I should hold a small but lasting spatial advantage, with no risk at all.

B: I must be quick if I really want to achieve something concrete. I should immediately jump in with 18 ♘e5 ♘xc3 19 ♕d3 ♕c7 20 ♕xc3 ♖e8 (20...♗f6 21 ♖e3 b4 22 ♕d2 ♖e8 23 ♖ae1 ♗xe5 24 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 25 ♖xe5 f6 26 ♖e3 ±) 21 a4 (21 b4, with 22 a4 to follow, is a good alternative). Play might continue with the logical 21...b4 22 ♕f3 ♗f8 23 ♖e3 f6 24 ♘d3 ♖xe3 25 fxe3 a5 26 e4 ♗e6 27 ♕f4, with a slight advantage.

C: Black's knight is an annoying piece and also his only active one. The exchange sacrifice with 18 ♖xe4 comes to mind. After 18...dxe4 19 ♘e5 Black's central pawns (c6 and e4) are under attack. If they drop, then my c- and d-pawns will be unstoppable.

Solutions

Test 1

All the plans described look attractive, securing an advantage for White, so the decision is difficult! Plan **C** (10 points) is the weakest one, as it is not easy to exploit the extra pawn, due to the exposed white king. The choice between the other two plans is a matter of taste. Plan **B** (18 points) is excellent and should win in the long run, although White must be on the alert for perpetual check. In my opinion Plan **A** (20 points) is the simplest and does not require too much calculation. The king's centralization, the active rook and the opponent's weak pawn-structure must be decisive strategic elements.

The game continued:

43 ♕b3! ♕xb3 44 ♖xb3 fxg3 45 hxg3 a6 46 ♔f1!

The impatient 46 ♖d3 ♔f7 47 e3? dxe3! 48 ♖xe3 would only favour Black (48 ♖xd8?? e2!).

46...♔f7 47 ♔e1 ♔e6 48 g4!

Clearing the 3rd rank for the rook, which can thus apply pressure to the black kingside pawns. Moreover, the text-move prevents the future creation of a passed black pawn by ...g5 and ...h5.

48...♔e5 49 ♖f3 ♖d7 50 ♔d2 h6

Intending ...g6 and ...h5. 50...g6 51 g5! would only help White.

51 ♖f5+! ♔e6 52 ♔d3 g5

Forced, as the powerful threat of 53 ♖f4 would win the d4-pawn.

53 ♖f8

Now there are three black weaknesses accessible to the white rook (a6, d4 and h6), while Black's pieces are quite passive. Consequently, it is not surprising that Black's position soon collapses.

53...♔e7 54 ♖c8 ♖d6 *(D)*

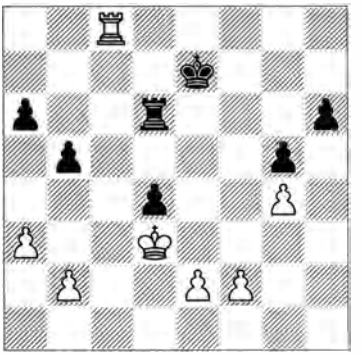
55 ♖c7+! ♔e8

Unappetizing, but 55...♔e6 56 ♖h7! ♔d5 57 ♖e7! and 58 ♖e4 would not help Black either.

56 ♖c5!

Intending ♖e5+ and ♖e4, winning the initial target, the isolated black d4-pawn. The rest of

W



the game was one-sided, despite its long duration. White reacted correctly to any 'traps' Black set, and the end was:

56...♖f6 57 ♖e5+ ♔d7 58 f3 ♖c6 59 ♖d5+ ♔e6 60 ♖xd4 ♖c1 61 a4! ♖c5 62 ♖d8! bxa4 63 ♖h8 ♖a5 64 ♖xh6+ ♔f7 65 ♔e4 a3 66 bxa3 ♖xa3 67 ♖d6! ♖a2 68 e3 ♖a4+ 69 ♖d4 ♖a1 70 ♖b4 a5 71 ♖b7+ ♔e6 72 ♖b6+ ♔d7 73 ♖g6 ♖a4+ 74 ♔d5 ♖b4 75 ♖g7+ ♔e8 76 ♖a7 ♖b3 77 ♔e4 ♖b4+ 78 ♔f5 ♖b5+ 79 ♔g6 ♖e5 80 f4 ♖xe3 81 ♔xg5 ♖e7 82 ♖xa5 ♔f7 83 f5 ♖b7 84 ♖a6 ♔g7 85 ♖g6+ ♔f7 86 ♖c6 ♔g7 87 ♖c4 ♖a7 88 ♔f4 ♔h6 89 ♖c6+ ♔g7 90 g5 ♖a4+ 91 ♔e5 ♖a5+ 92 ♔e6 ♖a7 93 ♖d6 ♖a1 94 ♖d7+ ♔g8 95 f6 ♖f1 96 g6 ♖e1+ 97 ♔d6 ♖d1+ 98 ♔c6 ♖c1+ 99 ♔b5 ♖b1+ 100 ♔c4 ♖c1+ 101 ♔b3 ♖b1+ 102 ♔c2 ♖b8 103 ♖g7+ ♔f8 104 ♖h7 1-0

Test 2

Obviously, a central breakthrough is necessary in order to gain anything more than the better half of a draw. Plan **B** (0 points) does not help in this direction, as Black is not forced to continue with 32...d4; instead, he will just sit and wait, as White cannot improve his position. Plan **A** (5 points) is slightly better for White, although I doubt if he can achieve something more concrete from the position. But Plan **C** (20 points) is by far the best – the resulting position is hopeless for Black!

The game continued:

27 e4! dxe4 28 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 29 ♖xc4 ♖d2 30 ♖xe4 ♖xb2 31 ♖a4 ♖b7

Black will not be saved in an endgame such as after 31...♔f7 32 ♖xa7+ ♔f6 33 a4. White will push his a-pawn to a7 and then his king will pick up the black e5-pawn (♔e1-d1-c1-b1-b2 and so on). If instead of his weak e-pawn Black had an f-pawn, then this position would be a draw.

32 ♖a5 ♖e7

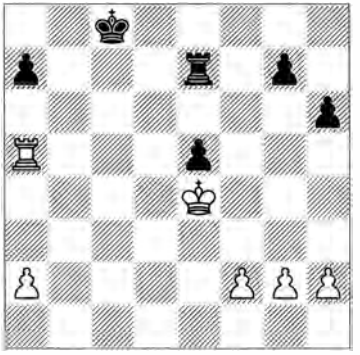
32...♔f7 makes no big difference: 33 ♖a6! (not 33 ♖xe5? ♖b1+).

33 ♔e2 ♔f7 34 ♖a6! ♔e8 35 ♔e3 ♔d8

Black is unable to hold on to his pawn: 35...♔f7 36 ♔e4 h5 37 h4 g6 38 g3 ♔g7 39 ♖a5 ♔f6 40 f3 ♖b7 41 ♖a6+ would also be an easy win for White.

36 ♔e4 ♔c8 37 ♖a5 *(D)*

B



White's position is won. First of all he will capture the black e5-pawn. Then he will proceed in accordance with the standard plans (advance of the white kingside pawns, advance of the a-pawn to a6, etc.). Black is unable to react, though it must be mentioned that he didn't defend in the best possible way in the game, making it easier for White!

37...♔b7 38 ♖xe5 ♖c7 39 ♔d3 ♖d7+ 40 ♔c3 ♔b6 41 f4 ♖c7+ 42 ♔b3 ♖d7 43 ♖e2 ♖f7 44 g3 ♖f6 45 ♔c4 ♔c6 46 ♖e7 1-0

Test 3

Of course it is quite difficult to choose between three attractive plans, but the truth revolves around the black king's lack of safety. Plan **A** (5 points) gives Black the chance to defend with ...♕f6 and ...♖ae8. Plan **B** (10 points) preserves the advantage in a quieter way, but Plan **C** (20 points) is the right one, as king safety is a really important factor in such positions.

The game continued:

25 h4! gxh4?!

Black should try 25...♘h5!? 26 ♗f2! (26 ♗h2? g4 27 ♘e5 dxe5 28 ♗xe5+ ♘g7 29 ♕f2 ∞) 26...g4 27 ♘g5 g3 (27...♕d7 28 g3! ±) 28 ♗e3 ♕f6 29 ♗f4!, although his position is still far from enviable.

26 ♗xh4

The correct recapture, as after 26 ♘xh4?! ♕g5! Black improves his position.

26...♕d7 27 ♗g5!

Vacating the important h4-square and the h-file, which will be used by White's queen.

27...♖ae8 28 ♕f2 ♕f7 29 ♗f4! ♖d8 *(D)*

Also losing was 29...♕f6 30 ♕g3! with an irresistible attack.

W

30 ♘g5!

The final blow, winning material.

30...♕g6

No better is 30...♕h5 31 ♖e3!.

31 ♕h4+ ♕h5 32 ♕xh5+ ♘xh5 33 ♘e6 *(D)*

B

White wins the exchange and the game.

33...♖a8 34 ♘xf8 ♘xf4 35 ♖xf4 ♖xf8 36 ♖e6 ♖f6 37 ♖xf6 ♘xf6 38 ♖xf5 ♔g7 39 ♖f3 ♘e4 40 ♖e3 ♘d2 41 ♖e7+ ♔f6 42 ♖xb7 a5 43 ♖b8 ♘xc4 44 ♖e8 ♔f5 45 ♖e6 a4 46 ♔f2 a3 47 ♔e2 ♘b6 48 ♖xd6 ♘a4 49 ♔d2 ♔e5 50 ♖a6 ♘b2 51 d6 ♘c4+ 52 ♔d3 ♘xd6 53 ♖xd6 1-0

Test 4

Plan **A** (20 points) is the right one. Bringing the 'poor' a8-rook directly into play can only be to Black's benefit, as the doubled black rooks on the e-file will be an extremely dangerous force. Plan **B** (10 points) does not promise more than equality, while Plan **C** (4 points) is unclear, as White also has targets after 15 ♘c3 ♖c8 16 ♖ad1!.

The game continued:

11...♖b8! 12 a3 ♖b6 13 ♘c3 ♖e6 14 ♗f4 ♗b7

Black's bishops look like hungry wolves.

15 ♘d3 c5!

Preparing 16...d5, with a clear advantage. The immediate 15...d5?! is inadequate due to 16 ♗e3!.

16 ♗e3

Strengthening Black's centre with 16 ♖xe6 fxe6 would not be a problem for Black.

16...♖e8!

Black defends energetically by tactical means, as 17 ♗xc5? is not on due to 17...♖xe1+ 18 ♖xe1 ♗xc5 19 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8 20 ♘xc5 ♕e1#.

17 b4?!

White should concentrate on defence with 17 f3 or 17 ♖ad1.

17...cxb4! 18 axb4 ♕c7 19 ♘e2

After 19 ♘c5? ♘g4! 20 ♘xe6 ♕xh2+ 21 ♔f1 ♕xg2+ 22 ♔e2 ♗f6 the game would be over.

19...♗d6! 20 ♘g3 *(D)*

Also bad is 20 h3 ♘d5! (21 ♘d4 ♘xe3! 22 ♘xe6 ♗h2+ 23 ♔h1 ♗xg2#).

20...♘e4?

Black didn't realize it was time for the harvest with 20...♗xg3! 21 hxg3 ♖xe3! 22 fxe3 (22 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 23 fxe3 ♕xg3 24 ♘e1 ♘g4 25 ♕xd7 ♕f2+ 26 ♔h1 ♕f1#) 22...♕xg3 23 e4 (23 ♘f4 ♖xe3 24 ♖f1 ♘g4 or 23 ♖e2 ♘g4) 23...♗xe4, winning.

21 ♗d4 ♘xg3 22 hxg3 ♗xg3!

At last winning the pawn, but far less impressive than 20...♗xg3!.

B

23 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 24 ♘c5 ♗h2+?!

24...♖g6! was much better.

25 ♔f1

Not, of course, 25 ♔h1? ♖h6.

25...♖e7 26 ♕a5! ♗d5?

Keeping the tension with 26...♕c8! is the appropriate continuation.

27 ♕xa6 h5 28 c4 ♕f4! 29 cxd5

Forced (29 ♖d1? ♕g4!).

29...♕xd4 30 ♘d3 h4!

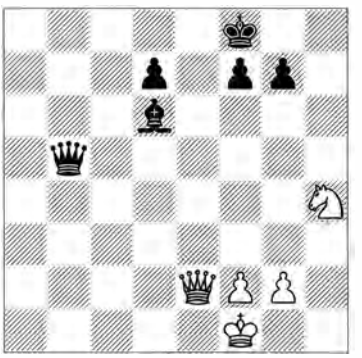
White would be fine after 30...♕xd5? 31 ♕a8+ ♕xa8 32 ♖xa8+ ♔h7 33 g3 h4 34 gxh4! (34 ♔g2? hxg3 35 fxg3 ♗xg3).

31 ♖e1!? ♖xe1+ 32 ♘xe1 ♕xd5

Equally good is 32...♕xb4 33 ♕d3 (33 ♕c8+ ♔h7 34 ♕xd7? ♕c4+) 33...♗d6.

33 ♕e2 ♗d6 34 b5 ♔f8 35 ♘f3 ♕b3! 36 ♘xh4 ♕b1+ 37 ♕e1 ♕xb5+ 38 ♕e2 *(D)*

B



38...♕xe2+?

A tragic mistake in time-trouble. In order to create winning chances, Black should keep the queens on the board. It is well known that knights are better than bishops when there are pawns on only one side of the board. So, a better piece can easily compensate for a missing pawn, which is also the case in this game.

39 ♔xe2 ♗c5 40 ♘f3 ♔e7 41 ♘e5! ½-½

A draw is inevitable, as White just places his knight on the d3-square, blockading the extra black d-pawn, while Black has no way to break through. A sad end to an interesting game.

Test 5

Dynamic equality is a fact. Plan **A** (0 points) fails after 15...♗d7! 16 ♕f3 ♖e7!, when Black is on top. Plan **C** (0 points) is also ineffective due to a simple combination, which we shall examine. Thus, Plan **B** (20 points) is the right one.

The game continued:

15 ♕d3?! ♘xe4!

With this simple combination Black assumes the advantage.

16 ♕xe4?!

White had to try 16 ♘xe4 ♗f5! 17 ♕xd6 ♗xe4 18 ♕xc6 ♗xc6 19 ♖ad1 b6, although Black has a clear advantage due to his strong bishop-pair. For practical reasons he tried to complicate the position a little bit, hoping for inaccuracies on Black's part.

16...♗xc3 17 ♕xc6 bxc6 18 ♖ad1 d5?

And Black complies! He should play the obvious 18...♖ad8 19 ♖d3 ♗b4! 20 ♖fd1 d5 21 ♘e5 ♖c8! ∓.

19 cxd5 ♗xd5 20 ♖c1! ♗f6 21 ♖xc5 a5! 22 ♘d4 a4?!

Black's last try could have been 22...♗xd4 23 ♗xd4 a4 24 ♗e3 ♖eb8, although White should be able to hold.

½-½

After 23 ♘xc6 axb3 24 axb3 ♗xb3 25 ♗d4 the draw is obvious.

Test 6

Plans **A** (20 points) and **C** (20 points) are nearly identical and both good. Black should avoid Plan **B** (0 points).

The game continued:

49...a5

Nothing changes with 49...♗e1 50 f3 (50 ♗e3?! ♔e7) 50...a5.

50 ♔b5 ♗e1 51 f3 ♔e8 52 h5 gxh5

Pawn exchanges do not favour the superior side, but 52...♔d7?! (52...f6!? 53 h6? gxh6 54 ♗xh6 g5! 55 f4 f5! and wins) is inferior: 53 hxg6 fxg6 54 ♗e3 (54 f4 ♗d2!) and ♗d4.

53 gxh5 ♔d7 54 h6 gxh6 55 ♗xh6 ♔e6 56 ♗g5 ♔e5

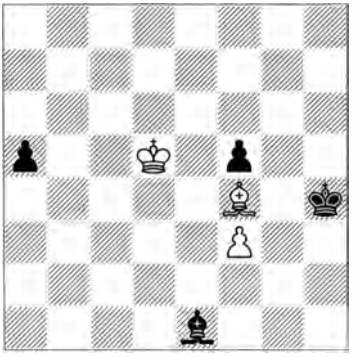
Black's position remains won. He will capture the white f-pawn, reaching a theoretically won ending.

57 ♗e3 f5 58 ♔a4 ♔f6 59 ♗f4 ♔g6 60 ♔b5 ♔h5 61 ♔c4

The white king cannot guard the a5-pawn forever, as its counterpart will invade via the kingside, and capture the f-pawn: 61 ♔a4 ♔h4 62 ♔b5 ♔h3 63 ♗c7 ♔g2 64 f4 ♔f3 65 ♗d6 ♗d2 66 ♗c7 ♔e4 67 ♔a4 ♗xf4 68 ♗xa5 ♗e5 69 ♗d2 ♔d3 70 ♗h6 ♗d4! 71 ♗f4 ♔e4.

61...♔h4 62 ♔d5 *(D)*

B



62...♗g3?

Black could have won with 62...a4! 63 ♔e6 (63 ♔c4 ♗g3 followed by ...♗d6 and soon ...♔h3) 63...a3 64 ♗e5 (64 ♔xf5 ♗c3!) 64...f4! 65 ♔f5 ♗d2 66 ♔e4 ♗c1!. Now, however, the placement of the black bishop on a spot from which it cannot simultaneously protect his a-pawn and threaten the white f-pawn is undesirable.

63 ♗c1 ♗c7 64 ♔c6! ♗d8 65 ♔b5 ♔g3 66 f4 ♔f3 67 ♗d2 ♔e2 68 ♗c3 ♔d3 69 ♗e5 ♔c2 70 ♔a4 ♔d2 71 ♔b5 ♔d3 72 ♗d6 ♔c3 73 ♔a4 ♔c4 74 ♗e5 ♔c5 75 ♗b8 ♔c6 76 ♗e5 ♗c7 77 ♗c3 ♔c5

Black has succeeded in switching his bishop to the right spot and will now head for the f-pawn with his king.

78 ♗d2 ♔c4 79 ♗c1 ♔d3 80 ♔b3 ♔e2 81 ♔a4 ♔f3 82 ♗d2 ♔e4 83 ♔b3 a4+?

A bad move, giving away the win. Black could have won with 83...♗b6! 84 ♔a4 ♔d3 85 ♗e1 ♔e3.

84 ♔xa4 ♗xf4 85 ♗a5?

85 ♗e1! ♗e5 86 ♔b5 f4 87 ♔c6! would have held the draw.

85...♗e5 86 ♔b5

As 86 ♗d2 brings no results (see the comment on White's 61st move), White tries to reach a theoretical draw with his king behind the black pawn.

86...f4 87 ♔c4 ♗d4 88 ♗c7 f3 89 ♗g3 ♗g1! 90 ♗h4

White is reduced to moving his bishop, waiting for the opportunity to move his king to d5 when the black king moves away, or, alternatively, reach the promotion square with his king. 90 ♗e1 ♔e3 91 ♔d5 ♗f2 92 ♗b4 ♗g3 93 ♗c5+ ♔d3!! 94 ♗b6 ♗e1 95 ♔e5 ♗d2 96 ♗f2 ♔e2! 97 ♗h4 ♗e1 would also fail to save White.

90...♗h2?

Incomprehensible. 90...♔e3 91 ♔d5 ♗f2 92 ♗e7 ♗e1 93 ♗c5+ ♔d3! brings about the position referred to in the previous comment.

91 ♗e1?

Both sides make consecutive mistakes, illustrating the difficulty of conducting this endgame. White could have achieved his aim with 91 ♗f2!.

91...♔f4?

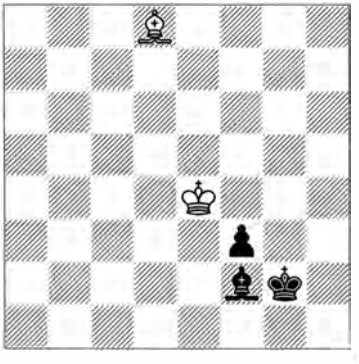
91...♗g1! would have been sufficed.

92 ♗f2 ♗g3 93 ♗b6 ♗e1 94 ♔d3!

Now White can achieve his aim by reaching a theoretically drawn position.

94...♔g3 95 ♔e4 ♗f2 96 ♗d8 ♔g2 *(D)*

W



In this ending the diagonal opposition loses. In order to reach the haven of the draw White must quickly place the g3-square under control by bringing his king to g4. If White continues mistakenly (i.e. practically offering Black a tempo) by moving his bishop, then he will lose; e.g., 97 ♗e7? ♗g1! 98 ♗h4 ♗h2! 99 ♗e1 ♗g3.

97 ♔f5! ♗g1 98 ♗h4 ♗f2

The difference is clear. After 98...♗h2 99 ♔g4! Black gets nowhere. White has reached the theoretical draw.

99 ♗d8 ♗c5 100 ♗h4 ♗e7 101 ♗e1 ♗d6 102 ♔g4 ♗b4 103 ♗h4 ½-½

Test 7

Plan **A** (5 points) is not bad, but Black seems able to keep White's advantage to a minimum. Plan **B** (10 points) is also OK. White's pressure, especially along the c-file, is strong, and the black d4-pawn irrelevant. But Plan **C** (20 points) is quite nice and highlights Black's Achilles' Heel.

The game continued:

22 e5!? dxe5

22...♗xe5!? 23 ♗f5 ♗d7 24 ♗xd7 ♕xd7 25 ♕d3 gives White sufficient compensation for the pawn.

23 ♗f5 *(D)*

B

23...♗xe3?!

Black should not give up his dark-squared bishop so easily. A better try is 23...♗d7 24 ♗xd7 ♕xd7 25 ♘b6 ♕b5 26 ♘f5 with compensation.

24 ♘xe3

24 d6!? ♗xf5 (24...♗xf2+? 25 ♕xf2 ♕d8 26 ♗xc8 ♖xc8 27 ♕xf6 +–) 25 ♕xf5 ♕e6 26 fxe3 ± is not bad.

24...e4

Black tries to be active, but he should have preferred the modest 24...♗d7 25 ♖a3 ♗b5 26 ♖d1, when White has compensation.

25 ♖fd1

25 f3!? ♗xf5 26 ♘xf5 ♕e5 27 fxe4 is equally good.

25...♗xf5 26 ♘xf5 ♕e5 27 ♘e3 ♘d7 28 d6 ♖e6 29 ♖d5 ♕f6 30 ♖ad1 ♖c8

Maybe Black should have tried 30...b6!? 31 ♖5d2! bxa5 32 ♘d5 ♕g7 (32...♕d8? 33 ♘e7+ ♔h7 34 ♘c6) 33 ♕a4 ♖d8 34 ♕xa5 ±.

31 ♖5d2 ♔h8 *(D)*

W

32 ♕b3! ♖c6?

A serious error! 32...♖b8 33 ♘d5 ♕f5 34 ♘b6 ♖d8 35 ♘c4 ♖b8 was essential.

33 ♘c4!

33 ♕xb7?! ♖exd6 34 ♕a8+ ♔h7 35 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 36 ♕xe4+ ♔g8 37 ♕e8+ ♘f8 38 ♘d5 ♕e6 39 ♕xe6 ♖xe6 40 g4 is only slightly better for White.

33...♕d8 34 ♕xb7 ♕c8 35 ♕b3! ♕d8 36 f3! e3?!

36...exf3?! 37 ♕xf3 ♖c8 38 ♖f2 ♖f6 39 ♕h3 +– is equally bad for Black, but 36...f5 37 ♖e2 ♕e8 38 fxe4 ♖xe4 39 ♖xe4 fxe4 (39...♕xe4? 40 ♕b7 +–) 40 ♕h3 ♔g7 41 ♖e1 ± was the only continuation. Now Black's position falls apart.

37 ♖e2 ♖c8 38 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 39 ♕xe3 ♕f6 40 ♘b6! ♕f5?

A blunder, but 40...♘xb6 41 axb6 ♔g7 42 ♕e7 +– and 40...♖d8 41 ♘xd7 ♖xd7 42 ♕e8+ +– are also insufficient.

1-0

Test 8

Plan **A** (5 points) is not optimal, because after 13...♘h8?! 14 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 15 ♘e5 ♘f7 16 f4! White should retain a slight advantage and, most importantly, Black lacks counterplay. Plan **B** (10 points) does not look bad, but it is slow, allowing White to pursue his own plans on the queenside. Plan **C** (20 points), although not very common in such positions, is the best option.

The game continued:

13...♘xf4! 14 exf4

14 gxf4? g5! 15 fxg5 ♘xg5 (15...f4?! 16 h4!) 16 ♘xg5 ♕xg5+ 17 ♔h1 ♗xh2! 18 ♔xh2 ♔h8 (not 18...♖f6?? 19 ♖g1 ♖h6+ 20 ♗h5) is bad for White.

14...g5! 15 ♘xg5

Also after 15 fxg5, the planned 15...f4 would be strong.

15...♘xg5 16 fxg5 f4!

The only move. 16...♕xg5? is wrong: 17 f4 ♕g7 18 c5 ♗c7 19 ♕d3 a5 20 ♘d2 gives White a slight advantage.

17 ♘d2 ♕xg5 18 ♘f3 ♕g7 19 ♗d3

An interesting position, with White having compensation for a pawn, could arise after 19 g4!? ♕xg4+ 20 ♔h1 ♔h8 21 ♖g1 ♕h5 22 c5 ♗c7 23 ♗d3.

19...♗d7 20 ♕e2 ♔h8 21 ♔h1?!

White should accept an unclear endgame after 21 c5! ♗c7 22 ♘e5 ♗xe5 23 ♕xe5 ♕xe5 24 dxe5 a5!.

21...♖f6?!

21...dxc4! is preferable: 22 ♗xc4 a5 23 ♘e5 axb4 24 axb4 ♖ad8! ∓.

22 ♘e5 ♖af8 23 ♕g4 ♕e7 *(D)*

An equal endgame arises after 23...♕h6!? 24 c5 (24 ♘xd7? fxg3 25 fxg3 ♖f2 26 h4 ♖g8 –+) 24...fxg3 25 fxg3 ♖f2 26 ♕h4 ♖xf1+ 27 ♖xf1 ♖xf1+ 28 ♗xf1 ♕xh4 29 gxh4 ♗xe5 30 dxe5 ♗e8 31 ♗h3, but Black wanted more.

W

24 ♘xd7

This cannot be criticized, but 24 c5 ♗xe5 25 dxe5 ♖6f7 26 ♖g1 ♖g7 (26...fxg3?! 27 ♖xg3 ♖xf2? 28 ♖cg1 ♕f7 29 ♗xh7! +–) 27 ♕h3 fxg3 28 fxg3 leads to an interesting and double-edged position.

24...♕xd7 25 cxd5 cxd5 26 ♖fe1 ♖g8 27 ♕h3 ♖e8 28 ♖e2 ♕g7 29 gxf4??

A blunder in time-trouble. 29 g4 f3 30 g5 ♖ff8 31 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 32 ♕xe6 ♕xg5 33 ♖g1 ♕f4 34 ♕h3 was essential.

29...♖h6! 30 ♕e3

30 ♕g2 ♕xd4 31 ♖g1 ♗xf4 −+.

30...♕f6! 0-1

Test 9

Exchanging queens will allow White to include his king in the proceedings. However, Black will not readily agree to that, so White has to force him. Plan **A** (3 points) doesn't do much, as Black can defend with ...♖c5 and/or sometimes obtain counterplay with ...e4. Plan **B** (8 points) also looks excellent, but Black might get some counterplay after 47 ♗f1 ♖c1 48 ♗b5 ♖g1. The correct plan is **C** (20 points).

The game continued:

47 ♘g5! ♕d7 *(D)*

Or 47...♖c3+ 48 ♔d2 ♖c2+ 49 ♔d3 e4+ 50 ♘xe4.

W

48 ♗f1!?

48 ♘xe6+ ♖xe6 49 ♗xe6 ♕xe6 50 ♕xb7+ ♔h6 51 a6 was also winning, but during the game White was wrongly afraid of the possibility of perpetual check after 51...♕g4.

48...♖c7

This looks like the only try, as 48...♖c1 49 ♗b5 ♕c8 50 ♕e7+ leads to mate.

49 ♗d3 ♕c6 50 a4

The immediate 50 ♕e4 was possible, but White retains winning chances even in the endgame, in case something goes wrong with his attack.

50...♖d7 51 ♕e4 ♕c1+

The endgame after 51...♕xe4+ 52 ♘xe4 ♔f7 53 a6 bxa6 54 ♗xa6 ♖a7 55 ♗b5 and ♘d2-c4 would be a slow death.

52 ♔e2 ♕b2+ 53 ♔f3 ♕c3 54 ♕xg6+ ♔f8 55 ♕f6+! ♔e8 56 ♕xe6+ ♔d8 *(D)*

Or 56...♖e7 57 ♕g8+ ♔d7 58 ♕d5+ ♔e8 59 ♘e4.

W

57 ♕g8+ ♔c7

Or the beautiful 57...♔e7 58 ♕f7+ ♔d8 (if 58...♔d6, then 59 ♘e4+) 59 ♘e6+ ♔c8 60 ♕e8+ ♖d8 61 ♕xd8#.

58 ♕c4+ 1-0

Test 10

In such difficult positions there cannot be more than one satisfactory plan. Plan **B** (0 points) is the worst of all, as after 38 ♖bd1 ♖ad8 39 ♘e3 ♖e6! Black would get at the white f6-pawn. Plan **A** (5 points) is also not optimal, as after 38 ♘xf4 gxf4 39 h4 Black can assume the initiative with 39...d5! 40 exd5 (40 ♖be1 dxe4 41 ♗xe4 ♗xe4+ 42 ♖xe4 ♕c6!) 40...e4. Although things are far from clear, I still prefer Black. Plan **C** (20 points) is correct.

The game continued:

38 h4! d5!

As the lines 38...♘xg2 39 ♗xg2 gxh4 40 ♕h6 ♖g8 41 ♖f5 ♖g6 42 ♕xh4 and 38...h6? 39 hxg5 hxg5 40 ♘xf4 gxf4 41 ♕h2+ seem pleasant for White, Black tries to mix things up.

39 exd5 e4 40 hxg5?

White should try 40 ♗d1 e3! 41 ♘xe3 ♖xe3 42 ♕xe3 ♘xd5 43 ♕f2 ♘xc3+ 44 ♗f3 ♘xb1 45 ♖xb1 gxh4 46 ♖e1, when he ought to hold the position.

40...♘g6?

40...exf3? 41 ♘xf4 and 40...♘xg2? 41 ♗xg2 are out of the question, but Black can grab the advantage with 40...♘xd5! 41 ♗e2 e3 42 ♕d4 (42 ♕e1 ♘f4 43 ♗f3 e2 ∓) 42...♖ad8.

41 ♗e2 e3 42 ♕d4! ♖ad8 43 ♖f5!

White is after the black e-pawn, but first drives the strong b7-bishop to an inferior square.

43...♗c8 44 ♖f3 ♖e5 45 ♖xe3 ♖xg5 46 d6!

Back-rank mate ideas allow White to enforce this important advance.

46...♕b8 47 ♕xc4 ♗b7 48 ♕xf7! ♘h4 *(D)*

W

49 d7?

White could win in various ways, such as 49 ♗f1 ♗d5 (49...♘xg2 50 ♖e7) 50 ♕e7 ♘xg2 51 ♗xg2 ♗xg2+ 52 ♔xg2 ♖xg4+ 53 ♔h3 or 49 ♗d3 ♗xg2+ 50 ♔g1 ♕b7 51 d7! ♕xd7 52 ♖e8+!. True, the pawn advance in the game was quite tempting, but not the best move!

49...♗xg2+ 50 ♔g1 ♗e4?

The last mistake. 50...♗b7? 51 ♖e8+ and 50...♖gg8? 51 ♗d3 ♘g6 52 ♖e7 are clearly losing for Black, but he should try 50...♗c6! 51 ♕e8+ (51 ♖d1?! ♘f3+! 52 ♗xf3 ♕g3+ =) 51...♖xe8 52 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8 53 dxe8♕+ ♗xe8 54 b4 axb3 55 ♖xb3, with just a slight advantage for White.

51 ♕e7?

White thought that this was a killer! But he should play 51 ♖d1 ♘f5 (51...♘f3+ 52 ♗xf3 ♕g3+ 53 ♔f1 ♕h3+ 54 ♔e1 ♕g3+ 55 ♔d2 +–) 52 ♖xe4 ♕g3+ 53 ♔f1 ♕h3+ 54 ♔e1 ♕h1+ 55 ♔d2 ♕xe4 56 gxf5 with a decisive advantage.

51...♘f5?

Not, of course, 51...♗xb1? 52 f7! but after 51...♘f3+! 52 ♗xf3 ♕g3+ Black would force a draw by perpetual check.

52 ♕xe4 ♘xe3 53 ♕xe3 ♖e5 *(D)*

Or 53...♕e5 54 ♕xe5 ♖xe5 55 ♖f1! ♖xe2 56 f7 +–.

54 ♕d4! ♔g8

There was no alternative, as the endgame after 54...♖xe2 55 f7+ ♕e5 (55...♖e5 56 ♖e1) 56

W

♕xe5+ ♖xe5 57 ♖f1 ♖f8 58 d8♕ ♖xd8 59 f8♕+ ♖xf8 60 ♖xf8+ is lost.

55 ♗c4+ ♔f8 56 ♖f1 ♕c7 57 ♕f4 ♕c5+ 58 ♔h2 ♖g5 59 ♖e1 ♖g6 60 ♖e2?!

White could have crowned his efforts brilliantly with 60 ♖e8+! ♖xe8 61 dxe8♕+ ♔xe8 62 f7+ ♔f8 63 ♕b8+. Time-trouble was a major factor here.

60...♕b6 61 ♕e5 ♕xf6 62 ♕xf6+

The game was adjourned at this point, but Black resigned before resumption, because after 62...♖xf6 63 ♗b5 White wins easily. A rather interesting game with a lot of ups and downs!

1-0

Test 11

It seems that Black can retain a pleasant advantage with all three plans. But we should consider Plan **B** (7 points) as the weakest, as it throws away Black's advantage in the centre and creates a nasty hole on c4 for no reason. Plan **C** (13 points) is fine, but it does not allow Black to get a well-protected passed pawn, as White can prepare to capture with a piece on e4 (24 ♕e2, or 24 ♘d2, or even 24 exd5). With the correct Plan **A** (20 points) Black is able to squeeze the maximum from his position, as described.

The game continued:

22...dxe4! 23 dxe4

Black keeps a clear advantage after 23 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 (or 23...♘d5) 24 dxe4 ♖b8.

23...♖b8! 24 ♘d2 ♘d4 25 ♕d3

25 ♗xd4 cxd4, with the idea ...♘d7-c5, is not attractive for White.

25...h5! 26 ♘gf1 ♖d6! 27 ♗xd4

White's hand is forced, as 27 ♘c4?! ♖d7! ∓ and 27 ♕c4? ♕e6! 28 ♘e3 ♗h6! 29 ♔f1 ♗xe3

30 ♕xe6 ♖xe6 31 fxe3 ♘b3 32 ♘xb3 ♖xb3 −+ are not appealing.

27...cxd4 28 ♘c4 ♖c6 29 ♘fd2 ♘d7 30 ♖cb1 ♗b4! 31 ♕h3 ♘c5 32 a5 ♔g7

Threatening 33...♘xe4!.

33 ♘f3 f6 34 ♘cd2 ♕c8

34...♖bc8 ∓ and 34...♘d3! ∓ are also good enough.

35 ♕g3 ♕g4 36 ♖c1 ♖bc8 37 ♖c4 ♗xd2?!

Again 37...♘d3! was a stronger continuation.

38 ♕xg4

Forced (not 38 ♘xd2? ♕e2! and Black wins at once).

38...hxg4 39 ♘xd2 ♘d3 40 b3 ♘b2 41 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 42 ♔f1

There was no joy in the active 42 b4 ♖c2 43 ♘b3 (43 b5 ♖xd2 44 bxa6 ♖c2 45 a7 ♖c8 46 ♖b1 ♘d3! −+ or 43 ♘f1 ♖c4 44 b5 axb5 45 a6 ♖a4 46 ♖xa4 ♘xa4 47 a7 ♘b6 −+) 43...♖c4 44 ♘c5 d3! −+.

42...♖c2! 43 ♔e2 ♔f7! *(D)*

W

The king is an important piece in every endgame. Now Black is planning to invade with his king (...♔e7-d6-c5-b4-c3 −+) if White does not push his b-pawn.

44 b4 ♘c4 45 ♔d3 ♖c3+ 46 ♔e2 ♘d6 47 ♖h1 f5! 48 f3

48 exf5 gxf5 49 h3 d3+ 50 ♔d1 ♖a3 51 ♔c1 ♖a1+ 52 ♘b1 ♘c4 −+.

48...gxf3+ 49 gxf3 f4?!

The forcing variation 49...fxe4 50 fxe4 ♖e3+ 51 ♔f2 ♘xe4+ 52 ♘xe4 ♖xe4 53 b5 axb5 54 ♖a1 ♖f4+ 55 ♔e2 ♔e6 56 a6 ♖f8 57 a7 ♖a8 −+ is much better.

50 ♖b1 ♘b5 51 ♔d1 ♖c8 52 ♖b2 ♘c3+ 53 ♔e1 ♘a4! 54 ♖b1 ♖b8 55 ♘c4 ♔f6 56 ♘d2 ♖h8! 57 ♘f1 ♘c3 58 ♖b2 g5!

After some preparatory moves, Black is on the right track. By advancing his g-pawn he prepares the final blow.

59 ♖g2 ♖b8 60 ♖b2 ♖h8 61 ♖g2 ♖b8 62 ♖b2 g4! 63 ♘d2

No better is 63 fxg4 ♔g5! 64 h3 ♔h4!.

63...gxf3

63...♖h8! is even stronger.

64 ♘xf3 ♖b5

Black should avoid 64...♘xe4? 65 ♖e2.

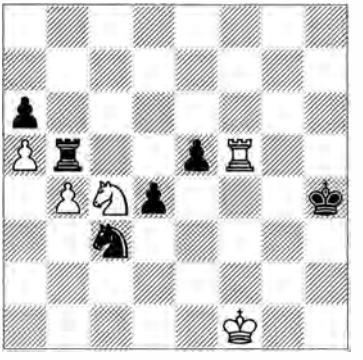
65 ♘d2 ♔g5! 66 ♔f1 f3! 67 ♘xf3+ ♔f4 68 ♘d2 ♘xe4 69 ♘c4 ♘c3 70 ♖f2+ ♔g5 71 h4+

71 ♘d6 is met by 71...♖d5 72 ♘f7+ ♔g6 and ...d3-d2.

71...♔xh4 72 ♖f5 *(D)*

Or 72 ♖f6 e4 73 ♖xa6 ♖xb4 −+.

B



72...e4! 73 ♘d6

The black pawns would be unstoppable after 73 ♖xb5 ♘xb5. The rest was quite easy:

73...♖xb4 74 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 75 ♖f4+ ♔g3 76 ♖xe4 ♔f3 77 ♖e1 d3 78 ♖d1 ♖b3 0-1

Test 12

In this position Black has managed to achieve good play. It would be 'unfair' to expect an advantage without Black's help, although White should try his best. Plan **A** (0 points) is unsatisfactory, as after 20 ♗d3? ♘a4! Black gains the upper hand. Plan **B** (5 points) is in accordance with the position's evaluation. A draw would not be far away, as White's pressure is negligible. White should try Plan **C** (20 points). Even if it is not enough for a serious advantage, it maintains the pressure and forces Black to find concrete moves to keep White's advantage to a minimum.

The game continued:

20 ♖b1! ♘xc4 21 ♕xc4 ♗e5

White would be much better after 21...♖fc8 22 ♕xb4 ♕xb4 23 ♖xb4 ♖xa2 24 ♘xd6 ♖c1+ 25 ♔g2 ♖cc2 26 ♖b8+ ♗f8 27 ♔h3!.

22 ♕xb4 ♕xb4 23 ♖xb4 ♖xa2 24 ♖c4!

Now Black needs to be on the alert.

24...♖fa8?!

After this White should gain the advantage. 24...♖b2? is bad due to 25 ♘xd6! +−, but Black should try 24...f5!? 25 exf5 ♖xf5 26 ♖c8+ ♖f8 27 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 28 ♖xh7 ♖d2 29 ♘c7 ♗d4 ±.

25 ♖cc7?!

Wrong. 25 ♖c6! promises an advantage.

25...♖b2?!

Black could force a draw with 25...♖e2! 26 ♖xf7 ♖a1+ 27 ♔g2 ♖aa2 28 ♖fc7 ♖xf2+ 29 ♔g1 ♖g2+ 30 ♔f1 ♖af2+.

26 ♘a7!

White could go astray with 26 ♖xf7? ♖xb5! or 26 ♘xd6? ♖xb7.

26...♖xb7 27 ♖xb7 ♗d4

Or 27...♔f8?! 28 ♘c6 ±.

28 ♘c6 ♖a1+?

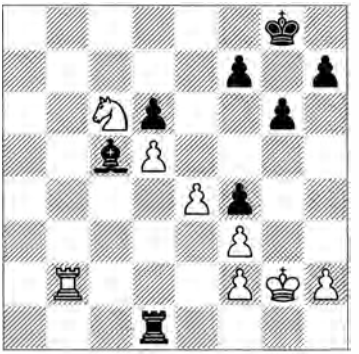
A critical mistake. With 28...♗c5! Black could keep White's advantage to a minimum.

29 ♔g2 ♗c5 30 ♖b2!

White would lose his advantage with 30 e5?! dxe5 31 ♘xe5 ♖d1!.

30...♖d1 *(D)*

W



Black seems to be doing OK, but actually White holds the advantage, as he can apply effective pressure against the weak squares in Black's camp (d6 and f7). This task is now easier because there no defensive forces around the black king.

31 ♘d8! ♗d4

Or 31...♔f8 32 ♘b7 ♗d4 33 ♖c2! ±.

32 ♖b8! ♔g7 33 ♖b7 ♔h6?!

Maybe 33...♖d2 34 ♘e6+ ♔f6 35 ♘xd4 ♖xd4 36 ♖d7 ± was the lesser evil, but still not enough to save Black.

34 ♘xf7+ ♔h5 35 ♘xd6 ♖d2

35...h6 36 ♘b5 ♖b1 37 d6 ♖b2 38 ♘xd4! ♖xb7 39 e5 +−.

36 ♖xh7+ ♔g5 37 h4+ 1-0

Black resigned in view of 37...♔f6 38 ♘e8+ ♔e5 39 ♖e7#.

Test 13

All three plans are satisfactory, but some are better than others! Plan **A** (10 points) is only sufficient for equality and Plan **C** (5 points) has the disadvantage of not completing development. The c8-bishop is struggling to get into play. After 18...g5?! 19 f5 ♘f8 White should continue 20 f6! (20 ♘a4 ♘d7 21 ♘c5 ♘e5 22 b3 b6 23 ♘d3 ∓) 20...♗h8 21 ♗d4, with an unclear game. The game continued with the correct Plan **B** (20 points):

18...f5! 19 exf5 *(D)*

After 19 e5? g5! 20 fxg5 (20 ♘e2 gxf4 21 ♘xf4 ♗xe5 ∓) 20...♘xg5 21 ♗f4 ♗xe5 22 ♖de1 ♘f7 Black can count on a healthy extra pawn.

B

19...♘f8!

The main idea behind Black's strategy.

20 ♗g1?

It was better to try 20 f6! ♗xf6 21 ♗d4 ♗xd4 22 ♖xd4 ♗f5 23 ♘e4 ♗xe4 24 ♗xe4 ♖ad8 25 ♖fd1 ♖xd4 26 ♖xd4 ♖e7, with just a slight advantage for Black.

20...♗xf5 21 ♖fe1 ♖xe1 22 ♖xe1 ♘e6 23 ♗e3 ♖d8

Black's pieces are all optimally placed, pressurizing White's pawns. A dream position for every King's Indian player!

24 ♔h2 ♗d4!

Now, exchanging the dark-squared bishops would lead either to the loss of the f4-pawn or the black rook's invasion on its 7th rank.

25 ♔g3 ♗xe3 26 ♖xe3 ♖d2 *(D)*

W

White cannot avoid material loses. Although he fought to the bitter end, the result could not be changed. Black converted his advantage slowly but steadily into victory.

27 ♗e4 ♘d4 28 ♗g2 ♖xb2 29 ♖e7 ♔f8 30 ♖c7 ♘e6 31 ♖c8+ ♔e7 32 ♗f3 ♖c2 33 ♘d1 ♖xa2 34 ♖h8 ♖a3 35 ♔f2 ♘xf4 36 ♖h7+ ♔d6 37 ♖xb7 ♘xh3+ 38 ♔g2 ♘f4+ 39 ♔f2 ♘d3+ 0-1

Test 14

Actually this is the kind of position we characterize as dynamic equality. This type of equality can easily be disturbed by the slightest slip. Both sides must create threats as soon as possible, so as not to fall into passivity. Plan **B** (5 points) leads to dead equality: 27 ♗e2 ♖h8 28 ♗h5 ♖c8 29 a3 ♗d6 30 ♖bc1 (30 ♖d2 ♗e5 31 ♖bd1 ♖c7 =) 30...♖xc1 31 ♖xc1 ♖c8 – both sides can sign the scoresheets without any bad feelings! Plan **C** (10 points) is rather equal (but also somewhat unclear) after 31...♖dg8, so Plan **A** (20 points) is the correct one and allows White to continue fighting under reasonable circumstances.

The game continued:

27 ♗c2!? h5 28 ♗b3 ♖h8 29 ♖bc1 ♗d6 30 ♘e2 h4?

Black missed 30...♗e5! 31 ♖d2 h4 32 gxh4 ♖xh4 33 g3 ♖h6 34 ♖cd1 ♗g4 (34...♖dh8?! 35 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 36 ♖xd5 g4 37 ♔f1 ♖h1+ 38 ♘g1) 35 ♔g2 ♗h3+ 36 ♔g1 ♗g4, when he would be able to achieve a draw.

31 gxh4 gxh4

Or 31...♖xh4 32 ♘c3 ♖dh8 33 ♔f1 d4 34 exd4 ♗xb3 35 axb3 ±.

32 ♘c3 ♖h5

Not much different is 32...h3 33 ♗xd5 (33 gxh3? ♖dg8+ 34 ♔f1 ♗xh3+ 35 ♔e2 ♗g4+ ∞) 33...h2+ 34 ♔h1 ♗xd5 35 ♘xd5+ ♔e6 36 ♖c2 ±.

33 ♗xd5 h3 34 ♘e4+ ♔e7 35 ♗xe6 h2+

Black must give this check, as 35...♔xe6 36 gxh3 ♖g8+ 37 ♔f1 ♗e7 38 ♖c7 ♖xh3 39 ♖dd7 +– is easy for White.

36 ♔h1 ♔xe6?!

Black must try 36...fxe6 37 f4 ±.

37 f4?!

White missed the deadly 37 ♘c5+! ♔e7 38 ♘xb7 ♖d7 39 ♘xd6 ♖xd6 40 ♖c7+ ♔d8 41 ♖xd6+ ♔xc7 42 ♖xa6 +–.

37...♗e7 38 ♖xd8 ♗xd8 39 ♘g3 ♖h7 40 ♘f1 ♗b6 41 ♘xh2 ♔d5 42 g3 f5 43 ♔g2 ♗xe3 44 ♖d1+ ♔c4 45 ♘f3 *(D)*

B

Now the game is decided, as White's extra material is worth its weight in gold in the endgame. Black slipped up on his 30th move and that was enough to seal his fate!

45...a5 46 ♘e5+ ♔b4 47 ♖d3 ♗a7 48 ♖b3+ ♔a4 49 ♖c3 ♔b5 50 ♖b3+ ♔a4 51 ♘c4 b5 52 ♘d6 b4 53 ♖d3 ♗b8 54 ♘xf5 ♔b5 55 b3 ♖c7 56 ♘d6+ ♔c5 57 ♔f3 ♖h7 58 ♘e4+ ♔c6 59 ♖d2 ♖h1 60 ♘f2 ♖c1 61 g4 ♖c3+ 62 ♔e4 ♖g3 63 g5 ♗c7 64 ♘d3 ♗b6 65 ♘e5+ ♔c7 66 g6 ♗g1 67 ♔f5 1-0

Test 15

White must be on the alert; otherwise he cannot claim any opening advantage. Plan **A** (0 points) is out of the question, as after 13 ♖fd1 ♕a5! (13...♗e7? 14 ♘d5 cxd5 {14...♗xd5? 15 cxd5

c5 16 b4 +−} 15 cxd5 ♕b7 16 dxe6 fxe6 17 ♕c4 ♔f7 18 ♕c7 ±) 14 c5!? dxc5 15 ♘d2 ♗e7 16 ♘c4 ♕c7 17 ♘d6+ ♗xd6 18 ♕xd6 ♕xd6 19 ♖xd6 ♖c8 Black is fine. Plan **B** (10 points) has a point, as after 13 ♘h4 ♖b8 14 b3 g6! 15 ♘f3! ♗g4 16 ♘d2 ♗g7 17 h3 ♗e6 18 ♖fd1 ♖d8 White can switch back to the right track with 19 b4! ±, but of course White has lost valuable time. It is clear that Plan **C** (20 points) is the correct one and very effective at that.

The game continued:

13 b4! ♕b7?!

The lesser evil was 13...a6 14 a4 ♖b8 15 b5 ±, but not 13...♗e7?! 14 ♘d5 cxd5 15 cxd5 ♕b7 16 dxe6 fxe6 17 b5 ±.

14 b5 ♗e7 15 bxc6 ♕xc6 16 ♘d5 ♗d8 17 ♘b4!

A strong idea, preparing the c5 advance. Black has no problems after 17 ♖fd1?! 0-0! 18 ♘b4 ♕c7 19 ♕xd6? ♕xd6 20 ♖xd6 ♗e7 21 ♖xd7 ♗xd7 22 ♘xe5 ♗xb4 23 ♘xd7 ♖fe8.

17...♕c7 18 ♘a6! *(D)*

B

18...♕a5!?

18...♕c6 19 c5 ±.

19 c5!

The right path, as I already mentioned. 19 ♕xd6? ♖c8 20 c5 ♗e7 21 ♗d2! (21 ♕d3 ♖c6) 21...♗xd6 22 ♗xa5 ♘xc5 23 ♘xc5 ♖xc5 24 ♖xc5 ♗xc5 25 ♘xe5 0-0 would not be to White's taste.

19...dxc5 20 ♘xc5 ♘xc5 21 ♖xc5!

21 ♗xc5?! ♗e7 22 ♕e3! ♖c8 23 ♗xa7 ♖xc1 24 ♖xc1 f6 25 ♘h4 ♔f7 26 ♘f5 ♖c8 with compensation.

21...♕a4!

The only chance, as 21...♕xa2? loses to 22 ♕b5+ ♔f8 23 ♕b7.

22 ♘xe5 0-0 23 ♘c6! ♕xa2

Black could try 23...♗b6 24 ♖c3! (24 ♖c2? ♗xe3 25 fxe3 =) 24...♗xe3 25 ♕xe3 ♕xa2 26 ♖a3 ♕b2 27 ♖xa7, but White still has every reason to smile (±).

24 ♗d4! ♗b6 25 ♘e7+

Or 25 ♕g3 f6 26 ♖cc1 ♖ae8 27 ♗xb6 axb6 28 ♘d4 ±.

25...♔h7 *(D)*

W

26 ♕g3?

In time-trouble White goes astray. The right idea was 26 ♖a1! ♕b3 (26...♕xa1+? 27 ♗xa1 ♗xc5 28 ♕c3!) 27 ♖c3 ♕b4 28 ♘c6 ♕b2 29 ♖b1 ♕a2 30 ♗xb6 axb6 31 ♖xb6 ±.

26...♖g8! 27 ♘xg8 ♖xg8 28 ♖a1 ♕e2 29 ♕e3 ♕xe3 30 ♗xe3 ♗xc5 31 ♗xc5 ♖c8 32 ♗xa7 ♖a8

The opposite-coloured bishop endgame is an easy draw. Black was lucky to escape into this.

33 f3 ♔g6 34 ♖a6 ♔h7 35 ♔f2 ♗c8 36 ♖a5 ♗e6 37 g4 ♔g8 38 h3 f6 39 f4 ♔f7 40 f5 ♗d7 41 ♔e3 ♗c6 42 ♖c5 ½-½

Test 16

Plans **B** (0 points) and **C** (0 points) are both bad for White. In the first case, after 18 dxc5? bxc5 19 ♘a4 ♕b5! 20 ♘c3 ♕b7 Black gets the upper hand. In the latter, after 18 e4? dxe4 19 ♘xe4 ♖xe4 20 ♖xe4 ♗xe4 21 ♕xe4 cxd4 22 b4 (22 ♘xd4? ♘c5 23 ♕e3 ♘e6 −+) 22...♘c7 Black should also feel more than happy. So, White should choose Plan **A** (20 points), which is also a typical one in similar positions.

The game continued:

18 ♘e2! g6 19 ♘d2! ♗a8 20 ♘b1

20 b4!? c4 (20...cxb4 21 ♕a4! ♘c7 22 axb4 ±) 21 ♘b1 ♘c7 22 ♘bc3 ± is also playable.

20...c4 21 ♘bc3 b5?!

21...♘c7 22 b3 a6 ± is better.

22 ♘f4 ♘c7 *(D)*

W

23 b3!

A rather well-known mechanism, which prevents dangerous future queenside activity (...a5 and ...b4) by Black. The protected passed black c4-pawn is in most cases unimportant, as it is well blockaded by the monstrous knight on c3. In such a position, Black should be ready to respond to bxc4 with ...dxc4, creating his own chances on the queenside, and not with ...bxc4, when he is practically devoid of counterplay.

23...a5

23...cxb3 is also an option, but then White is free to put pressure on Black's weak pawns in the centre and on the queenside.

24 ♖b1 ♕b6?

24...b4? 25 bxc4 dxc4 26 ♗xa8 ♕xa8 (or 26...♘xa8 27 axb4 axb4 28 ♘cd5) 27 axb4 axb4 28 ♖xb4 ♖xd4 29 ♖c1 ♖d7 30 ♖xc4 is also losing, but Black should have tried 24...♗g7 25 bxc4 dxc4 26 ♗xa8 ♕xa8 27 ♘xb5 ♘xb5 28 ♖xb5 ♖xd4 29 ♖eb1 ♕e4 30 ♕xe4 ♖dxe4 31 ♘d5 ±. Now it's all over.

25 bxc4 dxc4 26 ♗xa8 ♖xa8 27 ♘fd5! ♘xd5 28 ♘xd5 ♕d6 29 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 30 ♖xb5 ♖ec8 31 ♖c1 h5 32 ♕e4 1-0

Test 17

Well, Black is not obliged to create weakness on the light squares around his king by playing ...♔h8 and ...f6, so Plan **C** (10 points), although not necessarily bad, is not that accurate. Plan **B** (5 points) has a point in general, but White can continue after 20...♘c6 by 21 f4! exf4 22 ♕xf4 ♕e7 (22...♘e5 23 d4) 23 ♖a2, with pressure. Plan **A** (20 points) is correct.

The game continued:

20...c4! 21 ♕e3

The threat was the simple 21...♘b3.

21...cxd3

Black can delay this exchange with 21...♕c7, as a continuation like 22 d4? ♘b3 23 ♖a2 ♖a6 24 f4 exd4 25 cxd4 ♕a7 is surely in his favour.

22 ♕xd3 ♕c7 23 f4?!

White felt he could be optimistic! Equality can be maintained with the simple 23 a4 bxa4 24 ♖xa4 ♕c5+ 25 ♔h1 ♘c6.

23...♕c5+ 24 ♔h1 exf4?!

Returning the favour. Black gets a somewhat better position with 24...♘c4! 25 f5 ♘e3 26 ♖f3 ♘xd5 27 exd5 f6.

25 ♖xf4 ♘c4 26 ♖af1

26 ♖f5!? ♘e5 27 ♕d4 ♕c7 leads to unclear play; White could have tried this.

26...♘e5 27 ♕h3 ♖bb8?!

More precise is 27...h6! 28 ♗xf7+ ♘xf7 29 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 30 ♕e6 ♖bb7 31 ♕e8+ ♔h7 32 ♖xf7 ♕xc3 33 ♖f1 ♕d3 34 ♕f8 ♕xe4 35 ♕xd6 ♖f7, when the draw is very near.

28 ♖h4 h6 *(D)*

W

29 ♖xh6?!

White settles for a draw by perpetual check. He could try 29 g4! ♕xa3 30 g5 ♖bc8 31 gxh6 g6 32 ♖hf4! ♕xc3 33 ♕h4, when he enjoys a dangerous initiative. Things are far from clear, but there remains the feeling that Black needs to be more on the alert than White.

29...gxh6 30 ♕xh6 ♕xc3 31 ♕g5+ ♔h7 32 ♕h4+ ♔g8 ½-½

Test 18

Plan **B** (0 points) and Plan **C** (0 points), are not in accordance with the requirements of rook endings. Activity is the first rule and White should base his plans on that principle. Thus, the only correct plan is the active **A** (20 points).

The game continued:

26 ♖d1! b5 27 axb5 ♖xb5 28 ♖d6!? f5?!

An inaccuracy. Black does not wish to make any concessions, but 28...♖ab8! 29 ♖xf6 ♖xb3 30 ♖c7 ♖f8 31 ♖a7 ♖b5 would leave White with only a symbolic advantage, as he can win the a-pawn with ♖fa6 or increase the pressure with g4 and h4-h5, but without realistic winning chances in the face of correct defence by Black.

29 ♖g3+ ♔f8?

The last and decisive mistake. Black was forced to play 29...♔h8 30 ♖f6 ♖f8 31 h4! (31 ♖f3 ♔g7! 32 ♖6xf5 ♖xf5 33 ♖xf5 ♖b8 with a draw), when White retains a small advantage.

30 ♖h6! ♖ab8 31 ♖xh7 ♖xb3 32 ♖g5! ♖3b5

Other moves also lose: 32...♖8b5 33 ♖hh5 a4 34 ♖xf5 ♖xf5 35 ♖xf5 or 32...♖8b7 33 ♖h8+! ♔e7 34 ♖xf5 ♖a7 35 ♖xf7+!.

33 ♖xf5! ♖xf5 34 ♖h8+ ♔e7 35 ♖xb8

White has achieved a significant material gain and an easy win is now in sight.

35...♔d6 36 g4 ♖e5 37 ♔g2 ♔c5 38 h4 ♖e6 39 ♖a8 ♔b5 40 h5 a4 41 g5 1-0

Test 19

Plan **A** (20 points) is the most combative and the most appropriate, and there is not even the slightest risk involved. Plan **B** (15 points) is OK, but is equivalent to accepting a draw offer and shows a lack of fighting spirit. Plan **C** (5 points) only helps White and eases his task, as it creates weaknesses/targets for his bishop.

The game continued:

17...♗c2! 18 ♖e1

The alternative 18 ♖d2 is also acceptable: 18...♗e4!? (18...♗g6 19 ♖d1!) 19 ♘xe5! (19 ♘e1?! b5 ∓) 19...♘xe5 20 ♖e2 f5 21 f3 ♗xf3 22 ♖xe5+ ♔f6 23 ♖e1 ♗e4 24 ♗e3, with equal chances but not yet drawn!

18...f6 19 ♗e3

This natural developing move is much better than 19 ♘d4?! ♘xd4 20 cxd4 e4 21 f3 ♖hd8! ∓.

19...♖hd8 20 ♗b6 ♖d5 21 ♖ac1 ♗d3 22 ♖cd1?!

Equality could be maintained by the modest 22 b3.

22...♗c4! 23 b3

Much worse is 23 ♘d2? ♗xa2 24 b3 ♖d3! −+, but White can also try 23 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 24 ♘d2 a5! ∓.

23...♖xd1 24 ♖xd1 ♗e2 25 ♖d2 ♗xf3 26 gxf3 ♖c8

Black has at last got the desired slight advantage. Although it is probably not enough for victory, it gives him reason to hope.

27 c4 ♘b8 28 ♗a5 ♘c6 29 ♗b6 ♔e6! 30 ♔f1 ♘e7 31 a4

31 ♔e2?! ♖c6 32 ♗e3 b5 ∓.

31...g5! 32 ♔e2 h5 33 ♖d3 ♘f5

Black is on the ascendancy! Now he has secured a pleasant advantage.

34 ♖d2 ♖c6 35 ♗e3 ♖d6! 36 b4? *(D)*

Losing at once. The only try was 36 a5 ∓.

B

36...♘xe3!

Black grabbed his chance to force a winning pawn endgame, completing the torture in style!

37 ♖xd6+

There was no difference in 37 fxe3 ♖xd2+ 38 ♔xd2 a5! 39 bxa5 f5 or 37 ♔xe3 ♖xd2 38 ♔xd2 a5! 39 bxa5 f5.

37...♔xd6 38 fxe3

White has no chance after 38 ♔xe3 a5! 39 bxa5 f5 40 ♔d2 h4!.

38...a5! 39 b5 f5 40 ♔d3

And White lost on time in a lost position.

0-1

Test 20

The watchword of the King's Indian Defence is activity! Plan **C** (20 points) is the most effective. Plan **A** (0 points) and Plan **B** (0 points) play into White's hands and leave him with all the pressure. In the first plan, after 21...♕b8 White should first play 22 ♗b5! and then ♗c6, a4, ♘c4, etc. In the second, the pawn on d6 is hanging.

The game continued:

21...♕e7! 22 g3?!

White should try 22 ♖xb6 ♘h5 or 22 ♗b5 ♘h5 23 ♘c4 f5 ∞.

22...h5! 23 h4

Or 23 ♖xb6 h4 24 ♘c4 ♖fd8 25 ♕b3 ♘h5, with the initiative for Black.

23...♗h6 24 ♘c4 ♘d7! ∓ 25 ♕b1 f5 26 exf5

The only move. Not 26 ♖f2? f4 27 g4 ♕xh4 28 gxh5 ♔h8 29 ♘xd6 ♖g8 ∓.

26...gxf5 27 ♗d3?

Forced was 27 ♖f2 ♔h8 28 ♖g2 ♕f6 ∓.

27...♕f6?!

Black slips. Stronger is 27...f4! 28 ♕e1 fxg3 29 ♕xg3+ ♔h8 ∓.

28 ♕b2 ♕g6

Again, 28...f4!? 29 ♕h2 fxg3 30 ♕xg3+ ♔h8 ∓ was stronger.

29 ♔h2 e4 30 ♗e2?

Passive and bad. White's only try was 30 ♗b1! ♗g7 31 ♕e2 f4 ∓ / ∓.

30...b5!!

An excellent idea, removing the b3-rook from the defence of its king (31 ♘d2 ♘e5 −+). 30...f4? 31 ♖g1 fxg3+ 32 ♖xg3 ♗f4 33 fxe4 ♔h7 34 ♔h3 ♗xg3 35 ♖xg3 would not be that clear.

31 ♖xb5 f4 32 g4

No help was 32 gxf4 ♖xf4! or 32 ♖g1 fxg3+ 33 ♔g2 exf3+ 34 ♗xf3 ♖xf3 −+.

32...hxg4 33 fxg4 f3 34 ♗d1 ♗g7

34...♗f4+ 35 ♔h1 ♘e5 36 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 37 ♕c1 ♖f4 −+ is also good enough.

35 ♕f2 ♕xg4

Or 35...♘f6 36 ♕g3 ♘xg4+ 37 ♔h1 ♗d4 −+.

36 ♖g1 ♕f4+ 37 ♔h1 ♖a7! 38 ♖g5 ♘f6 39 ♘e3 ♘h7 40 ♖g4 ♕e5 41 ♗c2 ♘f6 42 ♖g5 ♕d4 43 ♖b6 ♘e8?!

Better is 43...♔h8 44 ♖xd6 ♖xa3 −+.

44 a4 ♖af7 45 ♖b1 ♖f4! 46 ♖d1 ♕c3 47 ♖e1 ♖8f7 48 ♘g4 ♔f8! −+ 49 ♖e3 ♕d4 50 h5 ♘f6 51 ♘h2 ♘xd5 52 ♘f1 ♗f6 53 ♖xd5 ♕xd5 54 ♗b3 ♕xh5+ 55 ♘h2 ♖g7 56 ♕d2 ♗e5 57 ♕d5 0-1

White lost on time before 57...♕xh2+ 58 ♔xh2 ♖h4# could occur.

Test 21

In Plan **A** (5 points) White's thinking process would seem justified after 12 ♗f3 cxd4?! 13 cxd4 exd4 14 ♗c3! ± (14 exd4?! ♘ed5!), but Black is not obliged to accept the pawn sacrifice and can play 12...♖d8! instead. Plan **B** (0 points) creates no difficulties for Black. His better pawn-structure will prove to be a more significant strategic factor than White's bishop-pair. Plan **C** (20 points) is correct. Unbalanced and mobile pawn-structures generally favour the bishop-pair. Pawn weaknesses in the form of the white a- and c-pawns are unimportant, as Black cannot even approach them.

The game continued:

12 dxe5! ♕xe5 13 f3 ♘ed5

13...♘f5!? 14 ♘xf5 ♗xf5 15 e4 ♗e6 16 ♕c1 ± was a serious alternative for Black.

14 ♕c1!

White has reached the desired position and is now ready for further kingside advances.

14...♕e7?!

Black should try 14...♘h5 15 ♘xh5 ♕xh5 16 e4 ♘b6 17 a4 ♗e6 18 ♖b1 ±. Black is obliged to seek exchanges, neutralizing to an extent White's initiative in the centre and on the kingside.

15 e4 ♘c7 16 a4

16 ♗g5 h6 17 ♗f4 ± is also good.

16...♗d7 17 ♗f4! ♖fc8 18 ♖d1 ♘ce8?

A serious blunder, which ends the game abruptly. Black was obliged to struggle on with 18...♘fe8 19 ♕e3 ±.

19 e5! 1-0

Test 22

Plan **A** (0 points) is not acceptable. The exchange sacrifice is not that strong, and after 27 ♖ac1 White even enjoys a slight advantage. Plan **C** (5 points) is unclear after 28 ♘e5! ♘fe4 29 ♘xe4 ♘xe4, which Black should avoid as he has a better option: Plan **B** (20 points) is correct.

The game continued:

24...♖a5! 25 ♖ac1 ♖f5 26 ♘e2

Black would retain the advantage even after 26 ♘e4 ♘xe4 27 ♖xe4 ♘d5.

26...♘bd5 27 ♗h4 ♘h5 28 ♗g3

No better is 28 ♗g5 ♖8xf7! (28...♘hxf4? 29 ♗xf4 ♘xf4 30 ♘xf4 ♖8xf7 31 exf7+ ♕xf7 32 ♕xc6 ♗xd4+ 33 ♔h1 ♖xf4 34 ♕c8+ ∞) 29 exf7+ ♕xf7 30 ♕e4 h6 31 ♗h4 ♘hxf4 ∓.

28...♕c8 29 ♕e4 ♘hf6?!

This move is good enough, but 29...h6! 30 ♘c3 ♘dxf4 31 ♗xf4 ♘xf4 32 ♘xa4 ♕xe6 −+ is even better.

30 ♕d3

Covering the e3-square, as 30 ♕c2 ♕xe6 31 ♘g5 ♕e3+! 32 ♗f2 ♖xg5+! 33 fxg5 ♕xg5+ 34 ♗g3 ♕e3+! 35 ♔g2 ♘e4 is winning for Black.

30...♕xe6 31 ♘g5 ♕d7

Black has an appreciable advantage, thanks to his correct play so far.

32 ♕c4 ♘h5 33 ♘h3 ♖b8 34 ♕xa4

Or 34 ♕xc6 ♕xc6 35 ♖xc6 ♖xb2 ∓.

34...♖xb2 35 ♘g5? *(D)*

A blunder in a difficult position. White didn't like 35 ♕xc6 ♕xc6 36 ♖xc6 h6 37 a4 ♖a2 ∓, but he had no choice.

B

35...♘hxf4?!

The concrete 35...♖xe2! 36 ♖xe2 ♘hxf4 –+ would have been decisive, but Black's time-trouble was not helping at all! Black now needed to put in some extra effort, but his advantage was still enough for the win:

36 ♘xf4 ♘xf4 37 ♘e4 ♖f8 38 ♘g5 h6 39 ♗xf4 ♕g4+ 40 ♗g3 hxg5 41 ♕xc6 ♗xd4+ 42 ♔h1 ♗f6 43 a4 ♔g7 44 ♖e3 ♖a2 45 a5 ♕a4! 46 ♕b7 ♖f7 47 ♖c8 ♕xa5 48 ♖e1 ♖b2 49 ♕c6 ♕f5 50 ♖a8 g4 51 ♖a3 ♗d4 0-1

Test 23

This one is a matter of pure theoretical knowledge. In order to give a correct assessment of this position, one should know what has been played here so far and how it was assessed. Plan **B** (0 points) worked well for Black in the final position suggested in it, but White can try (instead of 15 a4) 15 a3!, which changes the assessment to at least ±. Plan **C** (13 points) is not that bad, but Plan **A** (20 points) is clearly best. All these details (and many more!) can be found in *A Complete Guide to the Grivas Sicilian* (Gambit, 2005).

The game continued:

13...b4!

With this quick queenside pawn expansion, Black is the first to start activity, not allowing White to play on the kingside.

14 ♘e2?!

The main alternative is 14 ♘d1 a5! 15 c4 bxc3 16 ♗xc3 a4! 17 ♘d4 ♘xd4 18 ♗xd4 ♗a6 19 ♘c3 ♕b7 = and this should have been preferred.

14...a5! 15 ♘bd4

White could try the immediate 15 c4, although after 15...bxc3 16 ♗xc3 ♗a6 17 ♗xa6 ♖xa6 18 ♖c1 a4! Black should be satisfied.

15...♗a6 16 c4

The alternative is 16 ♘xc6 ♕xc6 17 ♘d4 ♕b7 18 ♗xa6 ♖xa6 ∓.

16...bxc3

This is nearly always the right answer to a c4 advance in this particular variation. 16...♘xd4?! 17 ♘xd4 ♗xc4 18 ♖c1 d5 19 e5 ♘d7 20 ♗e3! ± would leave White satisfied.

17 ♗xc3 ♗xd3 18 ♕xd3 ♘b4

Black correctly decided against 18...♘xd4 19 ♘xd4 d5 20 e5 ♘e4 21 f5! ∞.

19 ♕b1 ♖fc8 20 a3 ♘c6

A more combative line than 20...♘a6 21 ♘b5! ♕b6 22 ♘xd6 ♗xd6 23 e5 ♘d5 24 exd6 ♘xc3 25 ♘xc3 ♕xd6 26 f5 ∞.

21 ♘xc6

Now 21 ♘b5?! does not work owing to 21...♕b6 22 ♘xd6 ♗xd6 23 e5 ♗xe5! 24 fxe5 ♘g4 ∓ / ∓.

21...♕xc6 22 ♘d4

22 e5?! is over-optimistic: 22...♘d5 23 ♖f3 dxe5 24 fxe5 ♕c4! ∓ / ∓.

22...♕b7 *(D)*

W

23 ♘f3

23 ♕d3!? a4! ∓ is another try. In general Black should be happy with his share of the chances.

23...d5! 24 ♘g5

Or 24 exd5 ♘xd5 25 ♕e4 a4 (25...♗xa3? 26 ♗xg7! ♗xb2 27 ♗xb2 ♕xb2 28 f5! with an attack) 26 ♗d4 g6 ∓.

24...dxe4 25 ♘xe4 ♘d5!?

The endgame resulting from 25...♘xe4 26 ♖xe4 (26 ♕xe4 ♕xe4 27 ♖xe4 ♗xa3 28 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 29 bxa3 ♖c5 ∓) 26...♗xa3 27 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 28 bxa3 ♕xb1 29 ♖xb1 ♖ab8 30 ♖be1 ♖c3 would offer slightly better chances for Black. Obviously, Black was looking for something more.

26 ♗d4

26 f5 ♖a6!.

26...g6 27 ♕d3 ♖d8 28 ♕f3 ♕d7

28...♖ac8!? 29 b3 ♕b5 ∓ is also good.

29 ♖c1 ♕a4 30 ♕f2

30 ♗e5!? ♖ac8 (30...f6?! 31 ♗c7! ♖d7 32 ♘c3! ♕b3 33 ♘xd5 ♕xd5 =) 31 ♘c3 ♘xc3 32 ♗xc3 ♕b3 ∓ was a reasonable option.

30...♖ac8

30...♘e3!? 31 ♗xe3 ♕xe4 ∓.

31 ♘c5?!

A second slip. 31 ♘c3! ∓ is necessary.

31...♕b5 32 ♘e4 *(D)*

B

32...♕d3?!

Returning the favour. 32...♖xc1?! 33 ♖xc1 ♘xf4 34 ♘f6+ ♗xf6 35 ♗xf6 also muddies the waters, but 32...♕b3! 33 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 34 ♘c3 a4 35 ♘xd5 ♕xd5 ∓ would increase Black's advantage.

33 ♘g5?!

A comedy of (slight) errors! Modest but correct was 33 ♘c3 ♘xc3 34 ♗xc3 ♖d5 35 ♖ce1 ♖cd8 ∓.

33...♖xc1 34 ♖xc1 ♕f5! 35 ♕h4?

A typical time-trouble error, although after the forced 35 ♘h3 a4 36 ♔g1 h6 Black's advantage is undisputed.

35...h5 36 ♖f1 ♖c8?!

36...♘xf4! 37 ♘xf7 ♗xh4 38 ♘h6+ ♔h7 39 ♘xf5 exf5 40 ♖xf4 ♗g5 −+ is an easier path to victory.

37 ♕f2 e5! 38 fxe5

Or 38 ♗xe5 ♗xg5 39 fxg5 ♕xf2 40 ♖xf2 ♖c1+ 41 ♖f1 ♖xf1#. The rest was easy:

38...♕xf2 39 ♗xf2 ♗xg5 40 ♗d4 ♖c2 0-1

A typical middlegame success of the 'Grivas Sicilian'!

Test 24

Plan **B** (0 points) certainly is not best, as it blocks one of the main pluses of White's position, the g2-bishop. Black is not forced to play the ridiculous 19...♗xf5?, which gives White a clear advantage, but can choose the natural 19...♗d7. After 20 ♘e7+ ♔h8 21 ♘ed5 ♘bxd5 22 ♘xd5 ♗c6 White has not achieved much. Plan **C** (0 points) is also not of much help after 19...♗d7 20 ♘d6 ♗c6. Plan **A** (20 points) is the best option. Sometimes even excellently-placed pieces have to retreat!

The game continued:

18 ♘b3! ♘c4

Best. Worse is 18...♘bd7?! 19 ♘a5 ♘e5 20 b5 axb5 21 ♘xb5 ± or 18...e5?! 19 ♘c5 ♘c4 20 b3 ♘b6 21 ♖d6 ♘a8 22 ♘d5 ♘xd5 23 ♖xd5 ♖e8 24 ♘d7 ♗xd7 25 ♖xd7 ±.

19 ♖a2

The correct reaction. 19 ♘a5?! is naïve: 19...♘xa5 20 bxa5 b6 =.

19...♗d7?!

Black should choose 19...b6 20 ♖d4 ♘e5 21 ♘d2, keeping White's advantage to a minimum.

20 ♘c5 ♗c6

A retreat like 20...♗c8 21 b3 ♘e5 22 b5 axb5 23 ♘xb5 b6 24 ♘a6 ♗xa6 25 ♖xa6 ± wouldn't change much.

21 ♗xc6 bxc6 22 b3! ♘e5 23 ♘xa6

23 f4! ♘g6 24 ♖xa6 seems more accurate, although the text-move is also satisfactory.

23...♖b6 24 ♖a5 ♘ed7

Or 24...♘d5 25 ♘a4 ♖b5 26 e4 ♘f6 27 ♘c3 ±.

25 ♘a4 ♖b7 26 ♖c1 ♘d5 27 ♖xc6 ♘xb4 28 ♘xb4 ♖xb4 *(D)*

W

29 ♖c7! ♘f6 30 ♘c5 ♘e4 31 ♖a4

31 ♘d7! ♖d8 32 ♖a4! ♖xa4 33 bxa4 is easier.

31...♘xc5 32 ♖xb4 ♘a6 33 ♖cb7 ♘xb4 34 ♖xb4 ♖d8

A case with 4:4 pawns on the other flank and a passed b-pawn. The superior side is able to win, thanks to the presence of the fourth pair of pawns on the kingside.

35 h4 h5 36 ♖b7 ♖d5 37 b4 g5?!

Although this move does not have any bearing on the result of the game, creating weak pawns is a mistaken policy and allows White to win more easily.

38 hxg5 ♖xg5 39 ♔h2 ♖d5 40 e3 ♔g7 41 ♔g2 ♖d2 42 ♔f3 ♖b2 43 ♖b8 f5 44 b5 ♔f6 45 b6 e5 46 b7!

The weak pawns that Black voluntarily created become targets for the white king.

46...♔g7 47 ♔g2 ♖b1 48 f4 ♖b2+ 49 ♔f1 1-0

Black resigned because after 49...exf4 50 exf4 ♔h7 the white king enters via e6. This is easily done with ♔e1-d1-f1-c1-c2-c3-c4-d5-e6 creating a zugzwang. Also winning was 49 ♔h3.

Test 25

White actually holds the advantage, because Black lacks serious counterplay. However, by choosing Plan **A** (0 points), White forfeits his plus after 20 ♗e5? ♗h6! with the idea ...f6. Also, 20 ♕d2 ♖fe8! 21 ♗h6 ♗h8 22 ♔g2 e5! allows Black back into the game, so Plan **C** (7 points) cannot be correct. Plan **B** (20 points) is the strongest, as Black's queenside is really weak.

The game continued:

20 ♕b3! e6 21 ♕b6 ♖a8 22 ♖a3

The threat of 23 ♖b3 forces Black to exchange queens.

22...♕c6 23 ♕b5!

After 23 ♖b3?! ♕xa4 24 ♕xb7 ♕c4 Black holds the barracks.

23...♕xb5?

A bad idea, based on a miscalculation. Black should continue with the immediate 23...♖fc8 24 ♖ea1, when White's plan of ♕d3, ♖b3-b5 and ♕c2-b3 would give him the advantage.

24 axb5 ♖fc8 25 ♖ea1 b6 26 b4!

Black thought this was impossible, but the truth was different!

26...♗f8 *(D)*

W

27 bxa5!

This was an easy combination to calculate. Of course 27 ♗d2? ♖ab8! or 27 ♖a4? ♖xc3 would be naïve.

27...♗xa3

A nice variation was 27...g5 28 ♗c7!! ♗xa3 (28...♖xc7 29 axb6 ♖xa3 30 bxc7 ♖xa1+ 31 ♔g2 ♖a8 32 b6 +–) 29 axb6 ♗b2 30 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 31 b7 +–.

28 axb6! ♖cb8?

Black had to try 28...♖xc3! 29 b7 ♖f8 30 b8♕ ♖xb8 31 ♗xb8 ♗e7 32 ♖b1 ±.

29 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 30 ♖xa3 ♖xb6 31 ♖b3

The endgame is won for White. The plans are well-known and can be found in a lot of textbooks. White will advance his king to the centre, exchange some central pawns and invade on either flank. In the meantime, Black can do nothing active or interfere with White's plan.

31...♔f8 32 ♔f1 ♔e7 33 ♔e2 ♔d6 34 ♔d3 e5?!

This eases White's task, although it doesn't affect the final result.

35 c4! dxc4+ 36 ♔xc4 exd4 37 ♔xd4

And White is ready to execute the final phase of his plan (king invasion).

37...f6 38 ♔c4 ♔c7 39 ♖e3 ♔d6 40 ♖e8 1-0

Test 26

Plan **B** (0 points) is wrong, as Black just creates new weaknesses on his queenside. After 12...a5?! 13 ♖ad1 d4 White can gain at least a slight advantage with 14 ♘a4!. Plan **A** (13 points) is OK, but in my opinion Plan **C** (20 points) offers more possibilities to Black and therefore should be chosen.

The game continued:

12...dxc4 13 dxc4 ♕c8!?

13...e4 is also acceptable: 14 ♘d4 ♗f7 15 ♖ab1 ♕c8 16 ♖fd1 ∞.

14 ♖ac1 e4

Black should be careful, as 14...cxb5? 15 ♘xb5 ± is out of the question.

15 f3

The g2-bishop must come into play. 15 bxc6?! bxc6 (15...♘xc6?! 16 ♘d5 ♗f7 17 ♖fd1 ∞) 16 ♘d4 ♗f7 17 ♖fd1 ♘bd7 ∓.

15...exf3 16 ♗xf3 ♘bd7 17 ♘d5!? c5

The more tactical 17...♘e5!? is also not bad: 18 ♘xf6+! ♗xf6 19 ♗g2 cxb5 20 ♕xb5 ∞.

18 ♗b2 ♗f7 19 ♗g2?!

19 ♘ef4!? ♘e5 20 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 21 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 22 ♘d5 ♗g7 23 ♖cd1, with equal prospects, was preferable, but White had a mistaken sacrifice in mind.

19...♘xd5 *(D)*

W

20 ♗xg7?

A fatal mistake, caused by unjustified optimism. White had to play 20 cxd5 ♗xb2 21 ♕xb2 ♖xe3 22 ♘f4 ♕e8 23 d6 ♖b8 24 ♖fd1, when he has compensation for the pawn, but Black has the pawn!

20...♘xe3! 21 ♗a1

No real help is provided by 21 ♕c3 ♘xf1 22 ♗h8 ♘e5 23 ♗xe5 ♕e6 24 ♗xb7 ♕xe5 25 ♕xe5 ♖xe5 26 ♗xa8 ♖xe2 27 ♔xf1 ♖xa2 ∓.

21...♘xf1 22 ♕b2

It seems that Black can defend successfully against White's threats on the long diagonal. 22 ♔xf1 is no better: 22...g5 23 ♕c3 ♘e5 24 ♕e3 f4 25 gxf4 ♕f5 26 ♗xe5 gxf4 −+.

22...♘e5 23 ♔xf1 ♕d7! 24 ♘f4 ♗xc4+! 25 ♔g1 ♕d4+

Exchanging queens was a relief for Black, but 25...♖ad8 −+ would have been quite strong.

26 ♕xd4 cxd4 27 ♗xd4 ♗xa2 28 ♘d5 *(D)*

B

As a rule, when there is material advantage, simplification is welcome! In most cases, it is better (and advisable) to return some of the extra material, in order to reach an easily winning endgame.

28...♖ad8! 29 ♘f6+ ♔f7 30 ♘xe8 ♖xd4 31 ♘c7

Or 31 ♗xb7 ♗d5 (31...♔xe8 32 ♖e1 ∓) 32 ♗xd5+ ♖xd5 33 ♘c7 ♖d2 −+.

31...♗c4 32 ♖e1 ♖d7! 33 ♘a8 ♖e7 34 ♖b1 b6 35 ♗c6 ♘xc6 36 bxc6 ♖e8 0-1

Test 27

Plan **B** (5 points) is too slow and can only be considered a last resort in such a good position. Plan **A** (13 points) is in the right direction and would be chosen by most players. But here it only comes second to the strong Plan **C** (20 points).

The game continued:

17 f4!! gxf4

Or 17...exf4 18 ♘xf4.

18 ♘xf4 b6

Black declines the offer, as after 18...exf4 19 ♗xf4 ♕a6 20 e5 h3 (20...f5 21 e6 ♘xe6 22 dxe6 ♗xe6 23 ♕f3 0-0-0 24 ♕e3 ± or 20...fxe5 21 ♗xe5 ♖f8 22 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 23 ♕h5 ♘f7 24 ♖f1 +–) 21 g3 ♕xa2 22 ♖f2 ♕a6 23 exf6 ♕xf6 24 ♗c1! ♕d6 25 ♗b2 White has an enormous advantage. Nevertheless, as declining the sacrifice does not improve Black's position, he should have accepted it and put the onus on White to prove its correctness. In such cases, it is better to play with material in hand, rather than nothing at all in return for one's suffering!

19 ♘h5 ♘g8 20 ♕f3

20 ♘g7+ ♔f7 21 ♘f5 ♗xf5 22 ♖xf5 ± is also strong, but slightly less effective.

20...♔e7?! *(D)*

Black's position was not exactly a work of art, but he should at least have chosen 20...♘f7 21 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 22 ♕xf6 ♘xf6 23 ♖xf6 ♔e7 24 ♖bf1 ±.

W

21 ♗g5! ♖xh5

Or: 21...fxg5 22 ♕f8#; 21...♘f7 22 ♗xh4 ♖h6 23 ♖b2 ♖f8 24 ♖bf2 +–.

22 ♕xh5 fxg5 23 ♕h7+ 1-0

Test 28

Plan **A** (20 points) is the strongest. White's rooks will carry the day, as Black does not have enough resources to survive. I have to point out Black's best chance though, namely 23...♖b7! (instead of 23...♖a8 24 ♖e3 ♕f6 25 ♖e8+ ♔g7 26 ♕e3 +–) 24 ♕d3 ♘g7 25 ♖e2 ♕g5 26 ♖fe3 ♘e6 27 ♖e5 ±. Plan **C** (0 points) is out of the question, as it is not in agreement with the position's evaluation and Black can create some counterplay with 23 b4 f5 24 c5 f4. Rooks operate on open files and this is the most important factor in such positions. The game continued with Plan **B** (16 points), which is quite similar to Plan A, but definitely not as good:

23 ♖cc3 ♘g7 24 c5 ♘e6 25 ♕h4 ♖b7

Maybe Black could try the endgame after 25...♕g5!? 26 ♕xg5 ♘xg5 27 ♖f4 f5 28 ♖a4 ±.

26 ♖fe3 ♕g7 27 b4?!

27 b3 ± is more to the point. Black's weak a-pawn should stay on the board.

27...axb4 28 axb4 ♖b8 29 ♖a3!

Rooks must operate on open files!

29...♕b2?

29...d5 30 cxd6 cxd6 31 ♖ac3 ± was Black's only acceptable continuation.

30 ♖ab3?

White could crown his efforts with a nice and not very difficult combination, prompted by Black's weak king: 30 ♖xe6! dxe6 (30...fxe6 31 ♕d8+ ♔g7 32 ♖f3 +– or 30...♕xa3 31 ♖e8+ ♔g7 32 ♕d4+ ♔h6 33 ♖e4 f6 34 ♕xf6 ♖xb4 35 ♕h4+ +–) 31 ♕d8+ ♔g7 32 ♖f3 ♕e5 33 ♕e7 +–.

30...♕g7 31 ♖a3! ♕b2? 32 ♖ad3?

Time-trouble caused this series of mutual mistakes.

32...♕xb4? *(D)*

After White's mistakes it is not inconceivable that Black could fight back with 32...♖xb4! 33 ♕e7 ♕g7 34 ♖b3 ♖xb3 35 ♖xb3 f5! 36 ♕e8+ ♕f8 37 ♕xf8+ ♘xf8 38 ♖a3 d5 39 cxd6 cxd6 40 ♗xc6. This position would give White only a slight plus in the endgame.

W

Now, after the mistaken capture on b4, White can win immediately.

33 ♖xe6! fxe6

White also wins after 33...dxe6 34 ♖d8+ ♔g7 35 ♕e7 or 33...♕xh4 34 ♖e8+ ♔g7 35 gxh4.

34 ♕d8+ ♔g7 35 ♕e7+ ♔g8 36 ♕e8+ ♔g7 37 ♖f3 ♕xc5 38 ♖f7+ ♔h6 39 ♕h8 ♔g5 40 h4+ 1-0

Test 29

White surely has the advantage, but it is not a large one, as Black has no static weaknesses. Plan **A** (13 points) is very much to the point and very similar to the best answer, Plan **B** (20 points). Plan **C** (5 points) is less accurate, as after 18 c5 Black can play 18...♘xc5! (18...dxc5?! 19 ♗h3 ♖e7 20 e5 ±) 19 e5 ♗xg2 (19...fxe5 20 ♗xc6 bxc6 21 fxe5 ♕g4 22 exd6 ♖xe1+ 23 ♕xe1 cxd6 24 ♖xd6 ±) 20 exf6 ♖xe1+ 21 ♖xe1 ♕f5 22 ♔xg2 gxf6 23 ♕xf6 ♕xf6 24 ♗xf6 ♔f7 with equality. You deserve the 5 points only if you calculated these variations.

The game continued:

18 ♖e3! ♖e7

18...♘c5 19 ♖de1 ♕g4 20 h3 ♕g6 21 ♕d4 is also slightly better for White.

19 ♖de1 ♕f8 20 a3 b6 21 b4 axb4 22 axb4 ♖ae8

Black must be careful, as 22...♕f7? is powerfully met by the thematic but surprising thrust 23 e5! ♗xg2 24 e6; e.g., 24...♖xe6 25 ♖xe6 ♗h3 26 ♖e7.

23 h3 ♕f7 24 ♕d3 ♗b7

Black could try 24...f5!? 25 exf5 ♖xe3 26 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 27 ♕xe3 ♗xg2 28 ♔xg2 ♕xf5 (28...♕xc4? 29 ♕e6+ ♕xe6 30 fxe6 ♘f6 31 b5 ±) 29 ♗c3 ±.

25 ♗d4 ♗a6 26 b5 ♗c8? *(D)*

A serious mistake. 26...♗b7 27 ♔h2 ♘c5 28 ♗xc5 bxc5 (28...dxc5 29 e5 ±) 29 b6!? cxb6 30 ♕xd6 ♕xc4 31 ♕xb6 ± was Black's best option. Now a tactical shot determines the result.

W

27 e5! ♔h8

Or 27...♘c5 28 ♗xc5 dxc5 29 ♗d5 ♗e6 30 exf6 +−.

28 ♗d5 ♕f8 29 e6!

This is much better than 29 exd6 ♖xe3 30 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 31 ♕xe3 ♕xd6 32 ♕e8+ ♕f8 33 ♕xf8+ ♘xf8 34 g4 ±.

29...♘c5 30 ♗xc5 dxc5 31 f5 ♖d8 32 ♕e4 ♖d6 33 g4 1-0

Test 30

It is really difficult to create winning chances, but Black should try to do so with Plan **A** (20 points). Plan **B** (0 points) is bad, because after 17...♘d4? 18 ♖d1 ♘b8 19 e5 (19 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 20 ♘xd4 cxd4 21 ♘d5 ♘c6 22 c4! ±) 19...♘bc6 White can continue with 20 ♗xd4! cxd4 21 ♘b5 f6 22 ♘exd4 ♘xd4 23 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 24 ♘xd4 fxe5 25 fxe5 ±. The expectations arising from Plan **C** (5 points) are overoptimistic. 17...♘f6 18 h3 e5 19 f5 ♘d4 20 fxg6 ♘xe2+ 21 ♘xe2 ♘xe4 22 gxf7+ ♔xf7 23 g4 both players have chances.

The game continued:

17...♗d4! 18 ♗xd4

18 ♘d1 is not much different after 18...e5! (18...♘f6 19 ♗xd4 ♘xd4 20 ♘xd4 ♖xd4 21 e5 ♘e4 22 ♖e1 ∞) 19 ♖f1 ♘f6 20 ♗xd4 cxd4 21 ♘f2 ♖e8 ∓.

18...cxd4 19 ♘d1 e5! 20 ♘f2 exf4

Black would also enjoy a slight advantage after 20...f6!? 21 ♖d1 ♘c5.

21 gxf4 ♘c5 22 ♖d1 a5 23 ♔b1 f6 24 ♔c1?!

Passive play cannot be advisable. 24 ♘g3 ♔f7 25 a3 ♔e6 26 h3 f5 ∓ was more natural.

24...♔f7 25 a3 a4 26 ♔b1

Again White should proceed with 26 ♘g3 g5 27 ♘d3 ♔e6. Now Black grabs his chance and increases his advantage.

26...g5! 27 ♖f1 h6 28 fxg5

Or 28 ♖d1 gxf4 29 ♘xf4 ♘e5 ∓.

28...hxg5 29 ♘g3 ♘e5 30 ♖d1

Forced, as 30 ♘f5? is inadequate: 30...♘f3 31 ♖h1 ♘d2+ −+.

30...♔e6 31 ♔a2 *(D)*

31...d3!

Exchanges should be in Black favour, as his king will be able to penetrate into White's camp.

32 cxd3 ♘exd3 33 ♘xd3?!

It is strange that when it became necessary, White failed to move his king! 33 ♔b1 ♖d7 ∓ was forced, although Black will succeed in

B

converting the advantage into the full point sooner or later.

33...♖xd3 34 ♖f1

There is no meaningful alternative. 34 ♖xd3 also loses: 34...♘xd3 35 ♘e2 ♔e5 36 ♔b1 ♘c5 37 ♘c3 ♘xe4 38 ♘xa4 b5 39 ♘b6 f5 40 ♔c2 ♔d4 −+.

The game was decided quite quickly:

34...♖d2 35 ♘f5 ♘xe4 36 h4 gxh4 37 ♘xh4 ♘c5 38 ♘g6 ♘d3 39 ♘f4+ ♘xf4 40 ♖xf4 b5 41 ♖b4 ♖d5 42 b3 axb3+ 43 ♔xb3 ♔e5 44 ♔c3 f5 45 ♖b1 f4 0-1

Test 31

Loss of time is unacceptable in modern chess. Of course I do not mean the manoeuvre ♘d2-f1-e3, which is quite common in this position and has a specific and important aim, but the useless prophylactic h3 move. So, the right plan should be **A** (20 points). The other two plans are commonly used in this type of position (without the useless h3 of course) and are also playable. Both of them (**B** and **C**) achieve 13 points each.

The game continued:

8...d5! 9 exd5

Alternatively, White could try 9 ♗b5!? ♕c7, when although Black should be satisfied, the game remains complex.

9...♘xd5 10 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 11 ♘e3

The pseudo-active 11 ♕g4?! gives Black the advantage after 11...0-0 12 ♗h6 ♗f6 13 ♘e3 ♗xc4 14 ♘xc4 (14 dxc4 ♔h8 ∓) 14...♔h8.

11...♗xc4 12 ♘xc4?!

Although this is the most natural move, White should have preferred 12 dxc4 ♕xd1+ 13 ♔xd1 0-0-0+ 14 ♔e1 ♗g5! 15 ♘d5 ♗xc1 16 ♖xc1 ♘b4! with just a very small advantage for Black.

12...0-0 13 a4

Securing c4 for the knight.

13...♕d5!

Black's centralized pieces and good central control give him the advantage.

14 0-0 ♖ad8 15 ♕e1

Black would hold the advantage even after the more natural 15 ♖e1 f5! 16 f4 ♗f6.

15...♘d4 16 ♘e3 ♕e6! 17 ♗d2 ♗g5!

The tempting 17...♕g6?! 18 ♔h1 ♘xc2? 19 ♘xc2 ♕xd3 20 ♗c3 ♕xc2 21 ♕xe5 ♗f6 22 ♕xc5 or 17...f5?! 18 ♗c3 f4? 19 ♗xd4 would have relinquished Black's advantage.

18 ♖c1 *(D)*

B

White's pieces are passive and misplaced. Therefore, this is the right moment to open up the position, trying to benefit from their misplacement. This is a common and well-known strategy.

18...e4! 19 dxe4 ♕xe4 20 f3?!

Black's threat was 20...♗xe3 21 ♗xe3 (21 ♕xe3 ♕xe3 22 ♗xe3 ♘e2+) 21...♘xc2. White should have played 20 c3 ♘b3 21 ♖d1 ♖fe8 (or 21...♕xa4 ∓), although Black has a clear advantage.

20...♕e5! 21 ♕f2 ♘e2+! 0-1

White resigned in view of 22 ♕xe2 ♖xd2 23 ♕xd2 ♗xe3+. A rather quick game, decided in the opening.

Test 32

Plan **A** (0 points) is inadequate. After 33 ♔g2 ♔f6 34 ♖f3 Black should play 34...e4!, with an equal position. Plan **C** (0 points) is also not helpful to White, as he is unable to improve his position. The only correct plan is **B** (20 points).

The game continued:

33 b3! axb3

Or:

a) 33...a3 34 ♖f2! ♔f6 35 g4! ♖xf2 36 ♔xf2, and the threat of ♖f3+ followed by ♖f8 and ♔e3-e4 decides.

b) 33...♔f6 34 bxa4! ♖xa4 35 ♖b3, threatening ♖b7 or ♖b5.

34 axb3 ♖f6

Forced, as otherwise the rook transfer ♖a2-a5 is immediately decisive.

35 ♖a2 ♖fb6 36 ♖a5 ♖xb3 37 ♖xb3 ♖xb3 38 ♖xc5 ♖b7

White has exchanged two of the four weak black pawns (a4 and c5) but paradoxically his advantage has increased! Naturally, there is a logical explanation for this phenomenon, and it consists of the increased activity of the white rook and the possibility it has gained of accessing Black's remaining weaknesses, at the same time driving its black counterpart into passivity.

39 ♖c6! ♔e7!?

Black 'sacrifices' a pawn, intending to free his rook from the protection of c7. Had he remained passive instead, then White would have won the black e5-pawn anyway, with ♔f2-e3-e4. From a practical viewpoint, the move in the game is the indicated course of action.

40 ♖e6+ ♔d7 41 ♖xe5 ♖b2 *(D)*

W

It seems that Black has enough counterplay to draw the game, as he has cut off the white king on its back rank and will now place his rook behind the white c-pawn. However...

42 ♖f5!!

By means of a series of accurate moves, White weakens the g6-square, in order to make it accessible to the white rook.

42...♔e7 43 ♖h5 h6

43...♖c2? 44 ♖xh7 ♔f6 45 ♖h4.

44 ♖e5+!

Now we see the idea behind 42 ♖f5!!.

44...♔d7 45 ♖e6 ♖c2 46 ♖g6 ♖xc4 47 ♖xg7+ ♔d6 48 ♖g6+ ♔xd5 49 ♖xh6

The two connected passed pawns will beat the isolated passed c-pawn. The white king's participation in the battle was not required (a very rare occurrence), as the white rook was exceptionally active.

49...♖c2 50 h4 c5 51 h5 c4 52 ♖h8 ♖e2 53 ♖d8+ ♔e4 54 h6 1-0

Test 33

Plan **B** (3 points) is really slow and gives White only a slight advantage, owing to his greater territorial control. Plan **A** (0 points), though alluring, fails to impress after 11...♘e5! 12 ♘a5 ♗xb5 13 cxb5 d5 14 ♘xb7 (14 ♕d4 ♘fd7) 14...♕xb7 15 ♗xe5 ♕xb5 16 e4 dxe4! 17 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 18 ♗xe4 ♖d8. So, the correct choice is Plan **C** (20 points). It is quite important to open up the position when we have short-term advantages, as explained in the evaluation.

The game continued:

11 c5! e5

Forced, as 11...♘e5? 12 ♘a5 ♗c8 13 ♗xe5 dxe5 14 c6! is extremely good for White.

12 cxd6 ♗xd6

Although White retains a serious advantage in any case, Black should consider 12...♕xd6 13 ♕xd6 ♗xd6 14 ♖fd1 exf4 15 ♖xd6 fxg3 16 hxg3 ± or 12...exf4 13 dxe7 ♘xe7 14 ♕d4 fxg3 15 fxg3! ♗c6 16 ♖xf6 gxf6 17 ♕xf6 ♖f8 18 ♗xc6+ ♘xc6 19 ♘b5 ±.

13 ♗g5 ♗e7

13...0-0? fails to 14 ♗xf6 gxf6 15 ♘e4, while 13...♗e6 14 ♗xf6 gxf6 15 ♘e4 ♗e7 16 ♘bc5 is similar to the game continuation.

14 ♗xf6!

It is important for White to gain central squares for his knights.

14...gxf6

Obviously 14...♗xf6 15 ♘c5 ♗f5 16 ♘d5 was not attractive either.

15 ♘d5 ♕d6

Trying to get his poor a8-rook into play.

16 ♖c1!

The second white knight is ready to invade Black's position.

16...♖d8 17 ♘c5 ♕b8

Or 17...♗c8? 18 ♘e4 +−.

18 e3!

An important move, gaining control over the d4-square and allowing the white queen to be transferred to the kingside. Black is lost.

18...♗e6

The alternatives 18...♗c8 19 ♕f3 ♕d6 20 ♘e4 and 18...♗xc5 19 ♘xf6+ ♔e7 20 ♘d5+ ♔d6 21 ♕h5 ♗b6 22 ♖fd1 +– are hopeless for Black.

19 ♘xe6! fxe6 20 ♕h5+ ♔d7?

He had to play 20...♔f8 21 ♘xe7 ♘xe7 22 ♖c4 ±.

21 ♘xf6+! *(D)*

B

1-0

White wins the house after 21...♗xf6 22 ♕f7+ ♗e7 23 ♖fd1+.

Test 34

Plan **C** (0 points) is completely irrelevant to the needs of the position. Black must avoid 16...d4? (after 14 f4 ♕e7 15 0-0 ♗c5 16 ♖de1) 17 ♘a4! ±, but after 16...♗d7 17 ♔h1 he has an equal game. Plan **B** (5 points) is too artificial, as White improves only his queen. Nevertheless, it is interesting (14 ♕a4 ♗f5 15 ♗xf5 ♕xf5 16 0-0). Plan **A** (20 points) is the best choice and the one in accordance with the requirements of the position.

The game continued:

14 ♘e2! ♕g5

The alternative was 14...♘e4 15 ♗c3! ♕e7 (15...♘xc3 16 ♕xc3!) 16 0-0 with a slight advantage for White.

15 ♗c3! ♔h8

An even less clear position could arise after 15...♕xg2!? 16 ♖g1 ♕f3 17 ♗xh7+ ♔h8 18 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 19 ♖xd5. Black was not willing to try it.

16 ♘g3 ♖e8 17 h4!? ♕g4

After 17...♖xe3+!? 18 ♔f1 ♕f4 19 ♘e2 ♖xe2 20 ♗xe2 ♘e4 21 ♗f3 I would prefer White's position, but this is probably a matter of taste.

18 ♗e2!?

White must be careful. The alluring 18 ♗xf6 gxf6 19 ♗e2 ♖xe3 20 0-0 ♕xh4 is unclear.

18...♕e6 19 ♘h5! ♘xh5

A forced exchange, as 19...♗e5? is met by 20 ♘xf6 ♕xf6 21 ♖xd5 ♗f5 22 ♗d3 ♗xd3 23 ♕xd3 ±.

20 ♗xh5 ♗d7 21 ♗f3 ♗c6 22 h5! h6 23 ♖h4?!

White should probably try 23 0-0 ♖ac8 24 ♕d2 ±.

23...♖ac8 24 ♖g4! d4!

24...♗f8?! is rather passive: 25 ♖dd4 ±.

25 ♖gxd4!?

White tries to complicate. 25 ♗xc6 ♕xg4 26 ♖xd4 ♖xe3+ 27 fxe3 ♕g3+ 28 ♕f2 ♕xf2+ 29 ♔xf2 ♖xc6 is equal.

25...♗e5?

A serious error. 25...♗xf3! keeps the game unclear: 26 gxf3 ♗e5 27 ♖d7 ♗xc3+ 28 bxc3.

26 ♗g4! ♕e7 27 ♗xc8 ♗xd4 28 ♖xd4 ♖xc8 *(D)*

W

White has won a pawn but this is not the only positive aspect of his position. The presence of opposite-coloured bishops guarantees White attacking possibilities.

29 ♕f5! ♖e8 30 ♖g4 f6?

The only chance was 30...♖g8 31 ♕e5 ♕xe5 32 ♗xe5 f6 33 ♗d4 ♖d8 34 f3 ♖d5 35 ♖h4 ♔g8 36 g4 ±.

31 ♖xg7! ♔xg7 32 ♕g6+ ♔f8 33 ♗b4 1-0

Test 35

Plan **A** (0 points), is completely wrong, giving up the bishop-pair and helping Black to get rid

of his weakness without any loss of material. Plan **B** (10 points) is OK, but White does not need to play in this way. Opposite-coloured bishops can help Black in his defensive efforts, as White's a-pawn is also weak. The correct plan is **C** (20 points); then White can slowly but surely cash in the desired point.

The game continued:

23 ♕c5! ♘d6

The alternative was 23...♕e6 24 ♖c2 ♕g6 25 ♗h5 ♕d6 26 ♗f3 ±.

24 ♗f3 ♖a6 25 ♗b4 ♘e4! *(D)*

A passive continuation like 25...♕e6 26 ♖a1 ♕c4 27 ♗xa3 ♗e6 28 ♕xc4 ♗xc4 29 ♗c5 +− would only play into White's hands.

W

26 ♗xe4!?

26 ♕c2 ♗f5 27 ♕b3 ± is also good.

26...♕xe4 27 ♕f8+?

White overlooked a tactical blow. 27 ♗xa3 ± is enough for a clear advantage.

27...♔h7 28 ♕xf7 ♗e6?

Black should play 28...♗h3!! 29 gxh3 (29 ♕f3 ♕xf3 30 gxf3 c5 31 ♗xc5 ♖g6+ 32 ♔h1 ♗g2+ 33 ♔g1 ♗h3+ =) 29...c5 30 ♗xc5 ♖g6+ 31 ♕xg6+ (31 ♔f1? ♕d3+ 32 ♔e1 ♖g1#) 31...♕xg6+ 32 ♔f1 ♕d3+ 33 ♔g2 ♔g6 34 ♗b4, with a draw.

29 ♕e7 ♕g6 30 f3! c5

Nothing is changed by 30...♗xa2 31 ♗xa3 ♕e6 32 ♔f2 +− or 30...♗h3 31 g3 ♕f5 32 ♔f2 ♗g4 33 ♕f8 +−.

31 ♕xc5 ♗xa2 32 e4!

Not 32 ♗xa3? ♕d3 33 ♗b4 ♕xe3+ 34 ♔h1 ♖g6 ∞.

32...♗e6 33 ♗xa3 ♗h3 34 ♖c2 ♖f6 35 ♕c3 ♗d7 36 d5 c6 37 d6 h5 38 ♕e3 h4 39 ♖c5?

39 f4! ♕g4 40 ♖f2 +− is a clear-cut route to victory.

39...♖xd6 40 ♖g5 ♖d1+ 41 ♔f2 ♕f7?!

More stubborn was 41...♕f6! 42 f4 ±.

42 ♗b2 g6 43 ♕c3 ♕f8 44 ♖a5?!

44 ♖e5 wins immediately.

44...♖b1 *(D)*

W

45 ♔e3!

Preparing 46 ♖a8. The immediate 45 ♖a8? fails to 45...♖xb2+.

45...♔h6 46 ♖a8! ♗e8 47 ♖xe8 ♕xe8 48 ♕g7+ ♔h5

48...♔g5 49 ♗f6+ ♔h5 50 ♕h7#.

49 g4+ 1-0

Mate follows: 49...hxg3 50 ♕h7+ ♔g5 51 h4#.

Test 36

Plan **A** (0 points) is not dangerous for White, as after 15...e6 16 b3 a5 17 ♗a3 ♖e8 18 ♘b5 unpleasant threats have appeared, such as ♘d6 and ♗c5. Plan **C** (10 points) seems to be OK, but White is not really threatening an early a5 advance and so he is not obliged to weaken the b5-square. So, Plan **B** (20 points), though somewhat artificial, is a good choice and allows Black to obtain a good game. It must be mentioned that the immediate 15...e5? is bad, not due to the variations given earlier, but because of 16 ♘c6! (16 ♘b3? ♗f5! 17 ♖a1 ♖c8 ∓) 16...♕c7 17 ♘b4! (17 ♗xd5? ♘xd5 18 ♕xd5 ♗b7 −+) 17...♗e6 18 a5 ♕c5 19 axb6 ♕xb4 20 bxa7 ♖xa7 21 ♗xd5 ♖d8 22 ♗d2!! ♕e7 23 ♗xe6 ♕xe6 24 ♕c2 ±.

The game continued:

15...♕d7! 16 b3 e5?!

This is premature. With 16...♖b8! 17 ♗b2 e5 18 a5 ♘a8 19 ♘c2 ♘c7 Black secures a slight advantage.

17 ♘c2 ♖b8

The alternative was 17...♗b7 18 a5 ♘c8 19 a6 (19 ♘b4 d4) 19...♗xa6 20 ♘b4 ♗b7 21 ♘xd5 ∞ and Black should have seriously considered it.

18 a5 ♘a4?

A blunder. The only move was 18...♘c4 19 ♕xd5 ♕xd5 20 ♗xd5 ♘xa5 21 ♗a3 ♖d8 22 ♖fd1 ♗b7 =.

19 ♗d2 ♘c5 20 ♗b4

Now White has a clear advantage.

20...♖b5 21 ♕xd5 ♕xd5 22 ♗xd5 ♗f5 23 ♗c4!

Most precise, as 23 e4? ♗xe4 24 ♗xe4 ♘xe4 25 ♗xf8 ♗xf8 would give Black some compensation.

23...♖xb4

Also unattractive was 23...♖fb8 24 ♗xb5 ♖xb5 25 ♖b2 e4 (25...♗xc2 26 ♖xc2 ♖xb4 27 ♖xc5 ±) 26 ♖bb1 e3 27 ♗xc5 ♖xc5 28 ♘xe3 ♗xb1 29 b4 and ♖xb1 +−.

24 ♘xb4 ♗xb1 25 ♖xb1 ♖b8

25...♖c8 26 ♘d5 ♔f8 is no different.

26 ♘c6 ♖b7 27 ♖d1 ♗f6 28 b4 ♘a4

Or 28...♘e6 29 ♖d6 ♔g7 30 ♗xe6 fxe6 31 e4 +−.

29 ♖d6 ♔g7 *(D)*

W

30 e4!

Paralysing Black. The rest is easy.

30...♘c3 31 f3 ♖c7

31...♗e7 32 ♘xe7 ♖xe7 33 ♖c6 +−.

32 ♗d3 ♘a2 33 b5 ♘c3 34 b6 axb6 35 axb6 ♖b7 36 ♘a5 ♖b8 37 b7 ♘a4 38 ♖c6 1-0

Test 37

Plan **A** (0 points) with 20...♕g3? is inadequate. After 21 f4! (21 ♗e3? ♕h2+ 22 ♔f1 b6 ∓ would really be strong) 21...♗h8 22 ♘e2 ♕h4 23 ♗g5 ♕h5 24 ♘g3 ♕h7 25 ♕xd5 ♗xc3 26 ♖c1 ♕g7 27 ♘e2 White stands much better! Plan **B** (5 points) is naïve and offers no more than equality. Plan **C** (20 points) is the optimal choice: it is straight to the point of contesting the initiative.

The game continued:

20...♘e6! 21 ♗e3

White's alternative was 21 ♘xe6 ♗xe6 22 ♗b3! (22 ♗e3? ♖c8 −+) 22...♕g3 23 ♖d1 ♗xh3 24 f4 ♗xc3 25 ♕xd5 ♔h7 26 ♗g5 ♖f8 ∓.

21...♘f4 22 ♕f2 ♕f6

Black could also think about the immediate 22...♕g5!? 23 ♔h1 ♕f6 24 ♖d1 (24 ♗a4 b6) 24...♗d7 ∓.

23 ♕d2

White would love somehow to solve the problem of his passive bishop, but he can't, even after 23 ♗a4!? b6! 24 ♗c6 ♖b8 25 ♗b5 a6 26 ♗f1 b5 ∓.

23...♕h4 24 ♕f2 ♕f6 25 ♕d2 ♕g5!

Repeating moves is not a bad habit, as it can help to avoid time-trouble. But of course two times are enough!

26 ♔h1 ♗d7 27 ♖g1?! *(D)*

An inaccuracy. White should have opted for 27 ♖b1 b6 28 ♗b3 ♕g3 29 ♕f2 ♕xf2 30 ♗xf2 ♖c8 ∓.

B

27...♕g3! 28 ♕e1 ♘h5?!

The idea is obvious, but 28...♘e2! 29 f4 ♕xe3 30 ♘xe2 ♗f6 ∓ is more forceful.

29 f4 ♗xf4 30 ♗xf4 ♕xf4 31 g3 ♕f6 32 ♔h2 ♖e8 33 ♕d2 ♕e5 34 ♖g2 ♕e3! 35 ♗b3 ♕xd2?!

Time-trouble (and blindness!) prevented the execution of the simple but effective combination 35...♘xg3! 36 ♕xe3 ♘f1+ 37 ♔g1 ♘xe3 −+.

36 ♖xd2 ♖e3 37 ♘e2?!

The last mistake. White could still fight on with 37 ♗xd5 ♘xg3 38 ♖g2 ♘e4 39 ♖xg6+ ♔h7 40 ♗xf7 ♖xh3+ 41 ♔g1 ♖xc3 ∓. It is clear that in the final position of this line White is doing better than in the game!

37...♗b5! 38 ♘d4 ♗c4

Now it's all over. The finish was:

39 ♗xc4 dxc4 40 ♘e2 ♘f6 41 ♖b2 b6 42 a4 ♘e4 43 a5 bxa5 44 ♖a2 a4 45 h4 a3 46 ♘d4 0-1

White's flag fell, making things easier for both sides!

Test 38

Plan **A** (0 points) is bad, as Black also gets his share of counterplay. Plan **B** (10 points) would be a reasonable choice, but it is inferior to Plan **C** (20 points). This is a characteristic example of the transformation of advantages, where the superior side is not carried away by the initial evaluation of the position but seeks to discover its truly significant aspects.

The game continued:

32 ♖a2! ♔d7 33 ♗c3 ♔e6 34 b4! axb4 35 ♗xb4 ♗xb4?!

Black should keep the bishops on the board, making White's task more difficult. A possible continuation could be 35...♗c7. Then White must play really carefully in order to win: 36 a5 ♖a6 and now:

a) Not the alluring 37 g4? fxe4! (37...f4? 38 h4 h6 39 h5 gxh5 40 gxh5 ♗d8 {40...♗d6 41 ♖g2 ♗xb4 42 ♖g6+ ♔d7 43 ♔xb4 +−} 41 ♖d2! ♗e7 42 ♗xe7 ♔xe7 43 ♔b4 ♔e6 44 ♖g2 +−) 38 fxe4 g5! (38...♗d8? 39 ♖d2 ♗c7 40 g5 ♖a7 41 ♖a2 ♖a6 42 ♖f2 ♗d8 43 h4 ♖a7 44 ♖f8 +−) 39 ♗c3 h6 40 ♖h2 ♗d8 (40...♖a7? 41 h4 ♗xa5? 42 hxg5 hxg5 43 ♖h6+ +−) 41 ♖d2 ♗c7, when White has got nowhere.

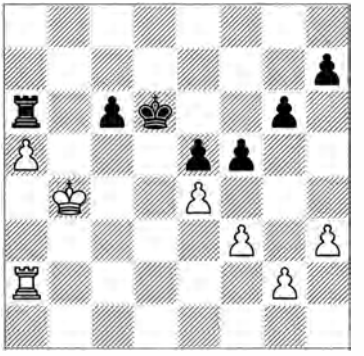
b) 37 exf5+! gxf5 38 g4 ♔f6 39 ♗c3 ♔e6 40 h4 ♗d6 (or 40...fxg4 41 fxg4 e4 42 ♖e2 ♔f7 43 ♖f2+! ♔e8 44 ♖f5 ±) 41 g5 e4 42 fxe4 fxe4 43 h5 ♗e5 44 ♗xe5 ♔xe5 45 g6! hxg6 46 h6!! +−.

Clearly it would have been easier in this case for White to go astray.

36 ♔xb4 ♔d6 37 a5! ♖a6 *(D)*

Forced, as after 37...f4? 38 a6 g5 39 ♖a1 h6 40 ♔c4 h5 41 ♖a3 ♔d7 42 ♔c5 ♔c7 43 ♖a4 h4 44 ♖a3 ♖a8 45 a7 ♔b7 46 ♔d6 the win is simple.

W



We now have a typical rook ending, where the outside passed pawn is worth its weight in gold.

38 ♔c4?

A careless move. 38 exf5! gxf5 39 g4 ± was correct.

38...fxe4?

And as many times before and many more in the future, Black returns the favour. After 38...f4! 39 h4 h6 40 ♔b4 ♔e7 41 ♔a4 ♔d6 42 ♖d2+ ♔c7 43 ♖d1 ♖a8 White has no way to win.

39 fxe4 ♔c7 40 ♔c5 ♔b7?!

40...♔d7 is more stubborn: 41 h4! ♔e6 (41...h5 42 ♖a3! ♔c7 43 ♔b4 ♔d6 44 ♖g3) 42 g4 ♔d7 43 g5 ♔e6 44 ♔b4 ♔d6 45 ♖f2 ♔e7 46 ♖f6. Although the result wouldn't change, White would have to work harder.

41 ♔d6 ♖a8 42 ♔xe5 1-0

Test 39

Plan **B** (0 points) and Plan **C** (0 points) are out of the question, as White cannot benefit from the time that Black needs to complete his development in this way. In such cases White must attack the centre as quickly as possible, so Plan **A** (20 points) is the only acceptable option.

The game continued:

13 c4! ♗d6

Or 13...♕a5 14 ♖ac1 ♗e7 15 ♘e5 and White is much better.

14 a5 ♕c7 15 dxc5 ♘xc5

15...♗xc5 makes no effective difference: 16 ♗xc5 ♘xc5 (16...♕xc5 17 cxd5 ♕xd5 18 ♕e3 ♕c5 19 ♘d4! ♗xg2 20 ♖ac1 +−) 17 ♕xb4 0-0 18 cxd5 ♗xd5 19 ♖ac1 ±.

16 ♕xb4

Even 16 a6 ♗a8 17 ♘d4 ± was good.

16...0-0

Black would stand miserably after 16...♘e4 17 ♕a4+ ♗c6 18 ♕c2 ± as well.

17 cxd5 ♗xd5 18 ♖ac1 ♕e7 19 ♗f4 ♗xf4 20 gxf4!?

Or 20 ♕xf4 ♘b3 21 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 22 e4 ♗c4 23 ♘e5 ♗b5 24 ♗f1! ±.

20...♖c7 21 ♘e5

21 f5!? ♗xf3 22 ♗xf3 exf5 23 ♕f4 ± was a reasonable alternative.

21...♗xg2 22 ♔xg2 f6 *(D)*

W

23 ♘d7!

A typical positional tactic, allowing White to exchange pieces. In the resulting endgame it will be easier for White to benefit from his material advantage.

23...♖xd7 24 ♖xd7 ♕xd7 25 ♕xc5 ♖b8

Alternatives like 25...♕d2 26 ♕c4 ♔h8 27 ♖c2 ♕xa5 28 ♕xe6 ± or 25...e5 26 fxe5 ♕g4+ 27 ♔h1 ♕xe2 28 ♕d5+ ♔h8 29 exf6 ♕xb2 30 fxg7+ ♕xg7 31 ♖g1 ± would also preserve White's advantage.

26 ♖c2 ♕b7+ 27 ♔g3?!

27 ♕c6! ± is much better.

27...♕e4 28 f3 ♕g6+ 29 ♔f2 h5?

Black should benefit from White's mistaken 27th move and opt for 29...♕h6! 30 ♕d6 ♕xh2+ 31 ♔e3 ♕g1+ 32 ♔d2 ♔f7 33 b4 ± / ±, but time-trouble affected his decision.

30 ♕c6?

Why not 30 ♕xa7 ♖d8 31 ♖c1 ±?

30...♔h7 31 ♕e4 ♖b5 32 ♖c6 ♕xe4 33 fxe4 ♖xa5 34 ♖xe6 ♖b5 35 ♖a6 ♖xb2 36 ♖xa7 ♖b4 37 ♖e7 ♔g6

An original 4:3 rook ending. White's doubled pawns constitute a weakness, but they also help create a passed pawn more easily.

38 ♔f3 ♖b3+ 39 e3

White is forced to return the extra material, as there is no other way to make progress. In return he will obtain a protected passed pawn.

39...♖b2 40 h4! ♖h2 41 f5+ ♔h6 42 e5!

A better try than 42 ♔g3 ♖e2.

42...♖h3+!

42...♖xh4? 43 e6 or 42...fxe5? 43 ♔g3! ♖e2 44 ♖xe5 would have been clearly mistaken.

43 ♔g2 ♖xh4

The careless 43...♖xe3?? loses to 44 exf6!.

44 e6 ♖e4?!

44...g6! would have led to a draw.

45 ♔f3 ♖e5 46 e4 h4

46...g6? is only seemingly strong: 47 ♖f7! gxf5 48 ♖xf6+ ♔g7 49 ♖f7+ ♔g8 50 exf5 and White wins.

47 ♖e8 ♔h7 48 ♖d8! g6

Black has run out of useful moves. His rook is forced to remain passive on e5, while 48...♔h6? 49 ♖h8+ ♔g5 50 ♖h7 g6 51 ♖g7 or 48...h3? 49 ♖d2! is undesirable.

49 ♔f4

After 49 ♖d5 ♔g7! 50 ♖xe5?! fxe5 51 e7 ♔f7 52 f6 g5 White obtains no more than a drawish queen ending.

49...♔g7 50 ♖d7+ ♔g8 51 ♖c7 h3 52 ♖c2 ♔g7 53 ♖h2 g5+ 54 ♔f3 ♖a5? 1-0

At the same time Black resigned. Instead, he had to try 54...g4+! 55 ♔f4! (55 ♔xg4? ♖xe4+ 56 ♔f3 ♖h4 57 ♔g3 ♖h5! 58 ♔g4 ♖g5+) 55...♔h6 56 ♔xg4! ♖xe4+ 57 ♔xh3 ♔g5 58 ♖f2, when White can gain slight winning chances by moving his rook to the e-file at the right moment, but the actual win is still in doubt.

Test 40

Plan **A** (0 points) in fact looks quite bad: after 23...♖c8?! 24 ♖xc8 ♗xc8 25 a4 f5 26 exf5! gxf5 27 a5 ♔f6 28 ♖c6 ♖a8 29 ♖c7 Black is tied down to defence, allowing White to claim the advantage. Plan **C** (0 points) is also bad. White must play not 24 ♗b5?, but 24 ♔f2! f5 25 ♔e3, with an advantage. So, Plan **B** (20 points) is in fact the only acceptable choice for Black.

The game continued:

23...♗b5! 24 ♖c2?

White must avoid 24 ♗xb5?! axb5 25 ♖c2 ♖fa8 26 ♖xb5 ♖xa2 27 ♖bb2 ♖a1+ 28 ♔f2 f5!, when Black has the initiative and some winning

chances. However, he should prefer 24 ♔f2 or even 24 ♗d1!?, with equal chances.

24...♗xe2 25 ♖xe2 ♖c8! 26 ♔f2 ♖c5!

Preparing the ...f5 break, as the immediate 26...f5 27 e5! dxe5 28 ♖e6 would not trouble White.

27 ♖eb2 f5 28 ♖c6

After 28 ♖b7? ♖xb7 29 ♖xb7 ♖c2+ 30 ♔g3 ♔f6 White faces multiple problems.

28...♖a5! 29 ♖c4 ♖b5!

White was threatening 30 a4!, locking in the a5-rook. Black will now be able to use the 'shy' a7-rook as well.

30 ♖bb4

30 ♖xb5? axb5 31 ♖c2 fxe4 32 fxe4 ♔f6 would bring Black a quick victory, as the white pawns on a2 and e4 will prove very weak and one of them will soon be captured.

30...♖ab7 31 a3 a5! 32 ♖xb5 ♖xb5 33 ♖c7 ♔f6 34 ♖a7 ♖c5 35 g3 h5 *(D)*

W

36 h4?

White's position is clearly inferior, but after this move it becomes easily lost. A better try was 36 ♔g2 fxe4 37 fxe4 g5! 38 ♔g1 g4 39 ♔g2 ♖c4 40 ♖xa5 ♖xe4 with an obvious advantage for Black, who however will still have to prove it.

36...♖c2+! 37 ♔g1

White also loses after 37 ♔e3 ♖c3+ 38 ♔f4 fxe4 39 fxe4 ♖xa3 40 ♖a8 a4 41 ♖a6 ♔f7 42 ♖a7 ♖a1 43 ♔g5 a3 44 ♖a4 a2 45 ♔h6 ♔f6 46 ♖a5 ♖g1. Of course there are many subvariations, but this is a typical line.

37...♖c3! 38 ♖xa5

White also has no chances after 38 ♔f2 fxe4 39 fxe4 ♖xa3, when Black follows up with ...♖a1, ...a4-a3-a2 and ...♔e5.

38...♖xf3 39 exf5 ♖xg3+ 40 ♔h2 ♖g4 41 fxg6 ♖xh4+ 42 ♔g3 ♖g4+ 43 ♔h3 ♔xg6 0-1

Test 41

Plan **A** (0 points) and Plan **B** (0 points) are too passive, giving up the extra material and leaving White with the initiative on the queenside. In the first case, after 27...♗h6? 28 ♗xh6 ♔xh6 29 ♘xa5 ♖a7 30 ♕c3! White has a clear advantage. In the second, White can take the pawn with 28 ♘xa5!, as Black has no way to exploit the pin. The energetic Plan **C** (20 points) consists of an excellent exchange sacrifice and seems to be the only acceptable path. Before we go on, I should mention that this was a 30-minute game, which explains the many mistakes from both sides. Nevertheless, it was a very interesting game.

The game continued:

27...♘xc5! 28 ♘b6 ♘e6 29 ♘xa8 ♖xa8 30 ♕c3 ♘d4 31 ♗f1 h4!

Ensuring control over the dark squares across the whole board! Black has reasonable compensation for the exchange and a fair share of the chances.

32 ♖a3 ♖a7 33 ♕c4?!

White should play 33 ♖ca1 ♕c7 34 ♖a4 c5 with an unclear position.

33...♗f6?!

Better is 33...♘bc2 34 ♖a4 ♘xe3 35 fxe3 ♘e6 ∓.

34 ♖ca1?

34 ♖a4 would retain the equilibrium.

34...♕c7??

Naïve. 34...♘bc2! ∓ was not so difficult.

35 ♖a4??

Missing 35 ♕xb4! axb4 36 ♖xa7, etc.

35...♔g7

Or 35...♘bc2!? 36 ♗xd4 ♘xd4 ∞.

36 ♕c3 c5 37 ♖c1 ♗e7 38 ♗c4 ♕d8 39 ♖ca1 ♕a8 40 ♗d3?

White goes astray. 40 f3! f5 41 exf5 gxf5 ∞ is essential.

40...♕d8?!

Black should play 40...♕xe4! 41 ♕xb4 ♕xd3 42 ♕b2 c4 ∓.

41 ♗f1 ♕a8 42 ♕c4?

42 ♗d3? is wrong, but 42 f3! was again necessary.

42...♘bc2?!

Many mistakes! 42...♘dc2! 43 ♖c1 ♕c6 44 ♕b3 ♘xe3 45 fxe3 ♕xe4 ∓ was quite good for Black.

43 ♖c1 ♕xe4 44 ♗xd4?

44 ♗d2! ♘b4 45 ♕c3 ∓ was not attractive, but it was the only real option for White.

44...♘xd4 45 ♖ca1 ♕f4!

Due to his superiority on the dark squares, Black has a clear advantage.

46 ♕c3?!

Maybe White should try 46 ♖xa5!? ♖xa5 47 ♖xa5 e4 48 ♖xc5 ♗xc5 49 ♕xc5 e3 50 fxe3 ♕xe3+ 51 ♔h1 ♕f4 ∓, but who wants to defend such an endgame?

46...♗d6 47 ♕e3 ♕f5

The alternative was 47...♕xe3 48 fxe3 ♘c2 49 ♖xa5 ♖xa5 50 ♖xa5 ♘xe3 ∓.

48 ♖xa5 ♖xa5 49 ♖xa5 e4! 50 ♗c4 ♗f4 51 ♕a3

Also hopeless was 51 ♕xd4+ cxd4 52 ♖xf5 gxf5 −+.

51...♗d6?

Wrong! 51...e3! is very strong (52 fxe3 ♕b1+ 53 ♔f2 ♗g3#) and quickly brings positive results.

52 ♖a7 ♘e6 53 ♕c3+ ♗e5 54 ♕b3?

54 ♕d2! ♘g5 55 ♔f1 ∓ is necessary.

54...♘g5?

Black could (again) crown his efforts with 54...♕f4! 55 ♕e3 ♕h2+ 56 ♔f1 ♗f4 57 ♕c3+ ♘d4 58 ♖xf7+ ♔h6 ∓.

55 ♕e3 ♗d4 56 ♕e2?

An equal endgame arises after 56 ♕d2! e3 57 fxe3 ♕b1+ 58 ♗f1 ♘e4 59 ♕e2 ♘g3 60 ♕f2 ♕xf1+ 61 ♕xf1 ♗xe3+ 62 ♕f2 ♘e2+ 63 ♔f1 ♗xf2 64 ♔xf2 ♘f4.

Now White cannot last long.

56...♕f4! 57 ♖b7 *(D)*

B

57...e3!

At last! Weaknesses on the dark squares will prove decisive.

58 fxe3

There was nothing better: 58 f3 ♗e5 −+.

58...♗xe3+ 59 ♔h1 ♘e4 60 ♕b2+

Or 60 ♖xf7+ ♕xf7 61 ♗xf7 ♘g3+ 62 ♔h2 ♘xe2 −+.

60...♗d4 61 ♕c2 ♘g3+ 62 ♔h2 ♘f1++ 0-1

White resigned in view of 63 ♔h1 ♕h2#.

Test 42

Plan **C** (0 points) has no underlying logic and is surely the worst option. The other two plans are correct and give Black a winning position. In my opinion Plan **B** (20 points) is the best, purely on practical reasons. Targeted pawns must first be blockaded and then captured! Plan **A** (17 points) is met quite often in practice and is one we must keep in mind in most endgames (and even middlegames): exchanging quantity for quality!

The game continued:

36...♘xf3 37 ♖xc6

White must accept the offer, as otherwise he just loses a pawn.

37...♖xc6 38 ♖xf3+ ♔g5 39 ♖g3 ♖d6?

Black loses his way! With 39...♖f6! 40 ♔c2 ♔h4 41 ♖g2 g5 42 ♔d3 ♖f4 43 ♔e3 ♔h3 44 ♖g1 ♖xg4 45 ♖h1+ ♔g2 46 ♖h6 ♖g3+ 47 ♔d2 g4 48 ♖xb6 ♖f3 49 b4 cxb4 50 axb4 g3 he could cash the point in.

40 ♔c2 ♖d4 41 ♖b3! ♖d6

41...♔xg4? leads to equality: 42 ♖xb6 g5 43 ♖c6 ♖d5 44 ♔c3 ♔f4 45 ♖f6+ ♖f5 46 ♖xf5+ ♔xf5 47 ♔d3 g4 48 b3.

42 ♖g3 ♔h4! 43 ♖g1 ♖d4?!

Black's last chance for 43...g5!.

44 ♖e1 *(D)*

44 g5 ♖g4 45 ♖e1 ♖xg5 46 ♖e6 b5 47 ♖b6 c4 48 ♔c3 is equal.

B

44...g5 45 ♖e6 b5 46 ♖b6 b4 47 a4!

The correct reaction! Not 47 axb4? cxb4.

47...♔xg4 48 a5 ♔f5?!

Black loses his head in his desire to win. He should have opted for 48...♔f3 49 a6 ♖d7 50 ♖b7 ♖d6 51 a7 ♖a6 =.

49 a6 ♖d7 50 ♖c6 g4 51 ♖xc5+ ♔e4 52 ♖c4+ ♔f3 53 ♖xb4 g3

And White (in time-trouble) accepted the draw offer! Of course 54 ♖b7?! g2 55 a7 g1♕ 56 a8♕? ♕d1+ 57 ♔c3 ♖d3+ 58 ♔c4 ♕c2+ 59 ♔b5 ♕b3+ 60 ♔c6 ♕c4+ 61 ♔b6 ♖d6+ 62 ♔a5 ♖d5+ 63 ♔b6 ♕c5+ 64 ♔a6 ♕a5# and 54 ♖b3+ ♔f2 55 ♖xg3 ♔xg3 56 b4? ♔f4 57 b5 ♖a7 58 ♔b3 ♔e5 59 ♔a4 ♔d6 60 ♔a5 ♖a8 are inadequate, but White could try 54 ♖b6! g2 55 ♖f6+, when Black has to find the extremely precise 55...♔e3! 56 ♖g6 ♖c7+!, after which 57 ♔b3 ♔f2 58 ♔a4 g1♕ 59 ♖xg1 ♔xg1 60 b4 ♖c1! 61 b5 ♖a1+! 62 ♔b4 ♔f2 is a theoretical draw.

½-½

Test 43

White does not have to be in a hurry! Plan **A** (0 points) allows Black to activate his pieces after 23 ♖d7 ♘d8! (23...♕c1+? 24 ♘e1 +–) 24 ♖c7 ♕f5 25 h3 ♘e6 26 ♖a7 with 26...♕b1+ 27 ♔h2 ♕c1!. Plan **B** (5 points) gives Black good chances for survival after 28...♖a8 29 ♖b6 a5!. Thus, Plan **C** (20 points) is the correct one.

The game continued:

23 h4! ♘d8

23...h6 24 ♘e5 ♕e8 25 ♖d7 ♕xe7 26 ♖xe7 ♘d6 27 ♖a7 ♖e8 28 ♘f3 ± is not helpful to Black either, but he should have preferred 23...♖e8 24 ♕d7! ♔f8 25 ♕xc8 ♖xc8 26 ♖d7 ♘d8 27 ♖a7 ♖c6 28 ♘e5, when, although White is much better, Black has some chances for survival.

24 ♘g5!

Threatening 25 ♘xh7! (and to meet 24...h6? with 25 ♘h7!).

24...♘e6

There was no choice, as 24...♘c6? 25 ♕e4! g6 (25...f5 26 ♕d5+) 26 ♖c1 and 24...♕b7 25 ♕xd8 both promise White an easy victory.

25 ♘xe6 fxe6

White would win after 25...♕xe6 26 ♕xe6 fxe6 27 ♖d6 so Black sets a little trap: 26 ♖d7?? ♕c1+ 27 ♔h2 ♕f4+ 28 ♔h1 ♕c1+ with a draw.

26 g3! ♖e8

26...♕c2? 27 ♕xe6+ ♔h8 28 ♖f1 ♖a8 29 ♖e1 is a clear-cut win for White.

27 ♕d7!

Forcing a transition to an excellent endgame, where Black has minimal saving chances in view of the multiple weaknesses in his pawn-structure (e6, a6).

27...e5

Black's other options did not offer any serious hope:

a) 27...♕a8 is met by 28 ♖d6! intending 29 ♖xe6 or 29 ♖xa6.

b) 27...♕xd7 28 ♖xd7 ♖a8 29 ♖b7! (29 ♖e7 a5 30 ♖xe6 axb4 31 axb4 ♖a1+ 32 ♔g2 ♖b1 33 ♖e4 also wins) and the white king will attack the black e-pawn.

28 ♕xc8 ♖xc8 29 ♖d6! ♖c3 30 ♖xa6 ♔f7

Black should have tried the immediate 30...e4 31 ♖e6 (31 ♔f1 e3!) 31...♖xa3 32 ♖xe4, when White still wins but his task is at least more difficult.

31 ♔f1 e4

Or 31...♖c2 32 ♖a5 ♖a2 33 ♖xb5 ♖xa3 34 ♖xe5.

32 ♔e2 ♖b3 33 h5! *(D)*

B

A standard idea, very often seen in this type of endgame. White is in no hurry to exchange the queenside pawns, but instead creates further weaknesses in Black's kingside pawn-structure.

33...♔e7

Black's alternative try, 33...h6 34 g4! ♖h3 35 ♖a5 ♔f6 36 ♖xb5 ♖xa3 37 ♖f5+! ♔e6 38 b5 ♖b3 39 ♔d2, would not have changed the outcome.

34 h6! gxh6 35 ♖xh6 ♖xa3 36 ♖h5!

36 ♖xh7+ also wins, but White does not wish to allow Black any counterplay with his b-pawn.

36...♖b3 37 ♖xb5 ♔f6 38 ♖b8

White's plans are now easy to establish. First he will push his b-pawn to b7 and then:

a) If the black king stays on the kingside, White will win the black e-pawn and then push his f-pawn as well. A possible continuation is 38...♔g7 39 b5 h6 40 b6 ♔h7 41 b7 ♔g7 42 ♔d2 ♔h7 43 ♔c2 ♖b6 44 ♔c3 ♔g7 45 ♔d4 ♖b4+ 46 ♔d5, and Black is forced to abandon the protection of his e-pawn as the threat of 47 ♔c6! ♖c4+ 48 ♔b5 is decisive.

b) If the black king moves to the queenside, then White will, at the appropriate moment, exchange his b-pawn for Black's kingside footsoldiers.

The above-mentioned plans are considered 'elementary' and can be found in many endgame works.

38...h5 39 b5 ♔e7 40 b6 ♔d7 41 b7 ♔c7 42 ♖h8 ♔xb7

Or 42...♖xb7 43 ♖h7+ ♔c6 44 ♖xb7 ♔xb7 45 ♔e3.

43 ♖xh5 ♔c6 44 ♖e5 1-0

Black resigned in view of 44...♖b4 45 ♔e3 ♔d6 46 ♖xe4.

Test 44

In such positions it is important to create immediate pressure. Black's pieces are not ready to defend in all parts of the board, as time is needed for regrouping. Plan **A** (13 points) is obviously good but slow, and Plan **C** (10 points) might give Black some counterplay via the a-file, which will be opened. The right strategy is to open the centre, i.e. Plan **B** (20 points).

The game continued:

17 e4! dxe4 18 ♘xe4 ♘d7

Black cannot play 18...♘xd4? 19 ♘xd4 ♕xd4 due to 20 ♗c3.

19 ♗g5! ♕a5 20 h4!

The attack is growing. The idea of h5 and transferring the queen towards the black king is quite strong.

20...♕d5 21 ♕c3 ♗g7 22 ♕e1!

White could protect his d4-pawn with 22 ♗e3, but this is not as important as the transfer of his queen to the kingside. The threat of 23 ♗c4 forces Black to accept the sacrifice, which opens more lines against the exposed black camp.

22...♘xd4 23 ♘xd4 ♕xd4 24 ♖d1!

With many threats, such as 25 ♗b5. Black is undeveloped (the c8-bishop and c8-rook are still on their starting squares) and the weak spots at d6 and f6 are a nightmare for him.

24...♕e5 25 ♕e3 *(D)*

B

25...♘f6?

Black cracks under pressure, as so often happens. His only chance was 25...♘f8 26 ♗e2! ♗d7 27 ♗f4, with a clear advantage for White.

26 f4!

Winning a piece. The rest was easy:

26...♘d5 27 fxe5 ♘xe3 28 ♗xe3 ♗xe5 29 ♗e2 b5 30 ♗f3 ♖b8 31 ♗a7 ♖b7 32 ♗d4 1-0

Test 45

Advanced and well-protected pawns often lay the groundwork for ideas and plans. Here, the e5-pawn offers a direction for our kingside plans. If White tries Plan **A** (3 points) or **C** (3 points), Black can continue with 18...b5!, preparing the manoeuvre ...♘b6-c4 and ...a5, with more than enough counterplay on the queenside. The queenside is the only part of the board where Black can create counterplay, so the logical approach for White is to be active on the opposite side. Plan **B** (20 points) is correct.

The game continued:

18 ♕e4! ♕d7 19 ♕g4 ♔h8?!

19...♔h7! is more accurate: 20 ♗d2 ♖ac8 21 ♘d4 ♘c3 22 ♗xb7 ♕xb7 23 b5 ♕d5 24 a4 ♗b4 25 ♘c6 ♕xd2 26 ♕xb4 ♘e2+ 27 ♔g2 ♕xb4 28 ♘xb4 ♘d4 29 ♖ac1 ±.

20 ♕h5 ♔g8? *(D)*

A fatal mistake. Black should try 20...♔h7 21 ♗d2 ♖ac8 22 ♖ac1 ±.

21 ♗xh6! gxh6 22 ♕xh6 f5

There is no salvation, as 22...♖fe8 23 ♖e4! (23 ♘g5? ♗xg5 24 ♕xg5+ ♔f8 25 ♕h6+ ♔e7

W

26 ♕h4+ ♔f8 27 ♖ad1 ♕d8 =) 23...f5 24 exf6 ♗xf6 25 ♖g4+ ♗g7 26 ♘e5 ♕c7 27 ♖e1 gives White too strong an attack.

23 ♕g6+ ♔h8 24 ♘d4! ♗c8

Or 24...♗d8 25 ♘xe6 ♖e8 26 ♘d4 ♗c7 27 ♘xf5 +−.

25 ♖ad1 ♖d8 *(D)*

W

26 ♘xf5! ♗f8 27 ♖e4!

All of White's forces are participating in the attack. The end was short:

27...♗g7 28 ♖h4+ ♔g8 29 ♗xd5 exd5 30 ♖xd5! 1-0

Test 46

Plan **A** (0 points) is obviously no fun for Black and Plan **B** (5 points) is not really threatening. It is easy to see that the only real option is Plan **C** (20 points).

The game continued:

17...♖e7! 18 ♘h3 ♖ae8 19 ♘g5 ♕h6! 20 f4 ♘g4 21 ♗xc6 ♕xc6 22 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 23 ♖e1

White must be on the alert. 23 f5? is inadequate: 23...♘e3 24 ♖f4 ♖e5 25 g4 ♕h6 −+.

23...♘e3 24 ♕e2 h6 25 ♘e4

Or 25 ♘f3 ♕a6 26 a4 ♕a5 ∓.

25...♖e6 26 c4 b6 27 ♕f3 f5 28 ♘d2 ♕e8?

An over-optimistic move. 28...g5! 29 ♕xc6 ♖xc6 30 ♘f3 ♖g6 31 ♘e5 ♖g7 ∓ is much better.

29 ♖e2!

White grabs his chance. 29 ♘f1? is wrong: 29...♘c2! 30 ♖xe6 ♕xe6 31 ♕a8+ ♔h7 ∓.

29...♔h7?!

Maybe Black should try 29...g5 30 fxg5 hxg5 31 ♘f1 g4 32 ♕f4 ♘d1 33 ♕g5+ ♔h8 ∓.

30 ♘f1!

White is now back in the game.

30...♖e7 31 h3 b5 32 ♘xe3 bxc4 33 bxc4 dxe3 34 ♔g2 ♕a4 35 ♕d5 ♕d1 36 ♕xf5+ g6 37 ♕g4 ♕xd3 38 h4 h5 39 ♕f3 a5 40 f5!

Although Black tried to be tricky, White didn't stray from the right path and, with precise play, held the equilibrium.

40...♕xf5 41 ♕xf5 gxf5 42 ♔f3 ♖e4 43 ♖xe3 ♖xc4 44 ♖e6 ♔g7 45 ♖c6 a4 46 ♖a6 ♔f7 47 ♖h6 ♖c2 48 ♖c6 ♖xa2 49 ♖xc5 ♔e6 50 ♔f4?!

This does not give the draw away, but 50 ♖a5! a3 51 ♔f4 ♖f2+ 52 ♔e3 ♖g2 53 ♔f3 ♖a2 54 ♔f4 = is an easier path.

50...♖f2+ 51 ♔e3 ♖b2! 52 ♖c6+?

White loses his head! 52 ♖a5 ♖b4 53 ♔f3 = was not that difficult to find.

52...♔e5?

52...♔d5! is surely best.

53 ♖c5+ ♔e6 54 ♖c6+? ♔d5! 55 ♖h6

No better is 55 ♖a6 ♖b4 56 ♖a5+ ♔c4 57 ♖xf5 a3 −+.

55...♔e5?!

Although this does not spoil Black's advantage, 55...a3! 56 ♖xh5 ♖b3+ 57 ♔d2 (57 ♔f4 ♖b4+ 58 ♔f3 ♖a4 59 ♖xf5+ ♔e6 60 ♖c5 a2 −+) 57...a2 58 ♖xf5+ ♔c4 59 ♖a5 ♖xg3 −+ is more precise.

56 ♖xh5 ♖b3+ 57 ♔f2 ♔e4! 58 ♔g2 *(D)*

58 ♖h8 also loses: 58...♖b2+ 59 ♔g1 a3 60 ♖a8 a2 −+.

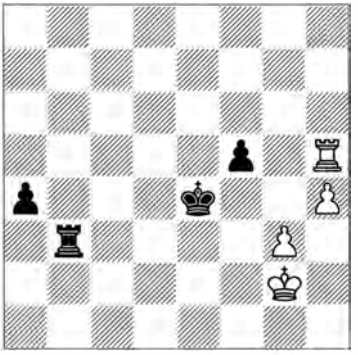
58...♖b8!

Of course! In the endgame, rooks generally belong behind passed pawns. How many times have we forgotten this principle and how times have we wondered how we could possibly forget it?

59 ♖h7 ♖a8 60 ♖e7+ ♔d5 61 ♖e1 a3 62 ♖a1 a2 63 ♔f3 ♔e5 64 ♖e1+ ♔f6 65 ♖a1 ♔g6 66 ♔f4 ♖a5 67 ♔e3

67 g4 is met by 67...♖a4+ 68 ♔e3 fxg4 −+.

B



67...♖a3+ 68 ♔f2

Or 68 ♔f4 ♔f6 69 h5 ♖a4+ 70 ♔e3 ♔g5 and the h-pawn falls.

68...♔h5 69 ♔g2 ♔g4 70 ♔h2 ♖a8! 71 ♔g2 ♖a4 72 ♔h2 ♖a3! 73 h5 ♔xh5 74 ♔h3 f4 75 ♔h2 fxg3+ 76 ♔g2 ♔g4 77 ♖c1 ♔f4 0-1

Test 47

Plan **C** (5 points) is out of the question, as it only promises equality after 21 b4?! ♖dc8 22 ♘b3 c4! 23 ♘a5 cxd3 24 ♖xc7 ♖xc7 25 ♖xc7 ♘xc7 26 ♘xb7 ♕xb7. White's idea is generally correct, but it cannot be realized in this particular position. Plan **A** (5 points) is also just equal, as White's bishop will never be allowed to attack Black's queenside pawns, while Black is ready to exchange all the major pieces. The correct plan is **B** (20 points).

The game continued:

21 a4! ♖dc8 22 e4!?

An interesting idea. White restrains the power of the black bishop, at the same time gaining control over important central squares.

22...♘ef6

Also possible is 22...♕b8 23 ♘e5 ♘ef6 24 h3 ±.

23 ♘e5!

White cannot hope for more than equality after the premature 23 axb5 axb5 24 b4 ♕a7 25 h3 ♕b6 26 bxc5 ♖xc5 27 d4 ♖xc2 28 ♖xc2 ♖xc2 29 ♕xc2 b4.

23...♘xe5?!

Black should prefer 23...♕b8! 24 h3 ±, as on his previous move.

24 ♕xe5 ♘d7 25 ♕b2 ♗c6 26 axb5 axb5 *(D)*

27 b4!

The time has come!

27...♗b7

W

Maybe Black should choose 27...cxb4 28 ♕xb4 ♘f6 29 d4 ♘e8 30 h3 instead, although White holds the advantage.

28 ♘b3?

After this miscalculation Black is back in the game. White could get a clear advantage with the natural 28 bxc5 ♖xc5 (28...♘xc5 29 ♕xb5 ♗a6 30 ♕b6 ♖c6 31 e5 ♖xb6 32 ♗xa8 ♖xa8 33 ♖xc5 ±) 29 ♖xc5 ♘xc5 30 d4 ♘d7 31 ♖a1 ♗a6 32 e5 ♕a7 33 ♘e4.

28...c4! 29 ♘a5 ♘b6?

Black slips again. 29...♕a6 30 ♗f1 ♕b6 31 ♘xb7 ♕xb7 32 dxc4 bxc4 33 ♖xc4 ♖xc4 34 ♖xc4 ♖xc4 35 ♗xc4 ♕xe4 36 ♕c3 ± was not that bad.

30 ♕e5! ♕b8?

The final and fatal mistake. 30...♕a6! is essential: 31 ♘xb7 ♖xb7 (31...♘d7 32 ♕d4 ♕xb7 33 dxc4 e5 34 ♕d3 bxc4 35 ♖xc4 ±) 32 ♖a1 ♘a4 33 ♗f1! f6 (33...h6 34 dxc4 bxc4 35 ♕a5 ♕xa5 36 bxa5 ♖b4 37 e5 ±) 34 ♕d4 ♖bc7 35 dxc4 bxc4 36 ♗h3! ±.

31 ♕xb5 ♗a8 1-0

Test 48

Plan **B** (0 points) is not a serious option. After 25 ♖c5? ♖d7! Black's threats are still valid, while White has in the meantime also misplaced his rook. Of course Black shouldn't exchange any rooks, as then he is forfeiting his potential pressure down the half-open files. Plan **C** (0 points) is more than fine for Black after 25 ♘d2 a5! 26 ♕c4 ♖ad8 27 ♘b3 ♕e8!. The only correct plan is **A** (20 points).

The game continued:

25 ♘e1! ♖ad8 26 ♖g3+ ♔h8 27 ♘c2 ♖g8?

The wrong direction, as there is nothing for Black in the g-file. 27...a5! 28 ♕c4 ± / ± was essential.

28 ♘e3 ♖dg5 29 b3

White's advantage has increased further.

29...h6 30 ♕d6 ♔h7 31 ♖e1 ♖8g7 32 ♖xg5 hxg5

The other capture is even worse: 32...♖xg5?! 33 f4 ♖g7 34 f5 +–.

33 ♘g4! ♗d5 34 ♖e3! ♔g6 35 ♖c3!

The c-file is more important. 35 ♖h3? ♖h7 gives White nothing.

35...♕e7 36 ♕g3 ♕a3 37 h3?!

Time-trouble prevented White from finding the straightforward 37 h4! ♕a1+ 38 ♔h2 ♖h7 39 ♘e5+! +–.

37...♖d7 38 ♔h2?!

Still playing safely. The active 38 f4!, aiming at the black king, is decisive: 38...♕a1+ 39 ♔h2 ♕b2 40 fxg5 ♗xg2 41 gxf6 +–.

38...♗c6?!

Black should seek survival chances in the endgame. 38...♕d6! 39 ♕xd6 ♖xd6 40 ♘e3 ♗c6 41 ♖c4 ± was essential.

39 ♖d3

39 f4! ♖xd4 40 fxg5 ♖d2 41 ♘e3 ♕d6 42 ♕xd6 ♖xd6 43 gxf6 ♔xf6 44 g4 +– was still the right path to follow.

39...♗e4? 40 ♖e3?

40 ♘xf6! +– wouldn't be that difficult to find with a little more time on the clock.

40...♗d5 *(D)*

W

41 f4!

Finally White understood what he had to do!

41...♖c7

There is no solution to be found: 41...♕d6 42 fxg5 ♕xg3+ 43 ♖xg3 +– or 41...gxf4 42 ♕xf4 ♕e7 43 ♖g3.

42 f5+ exf5 43 ♕xc7 fxg4 44 ♕d7 g3+ 45 ♖xg3 ♗xb3 46 ♕xb7 1-0

Test 49

Plan **B** (20 points) was the correct one. After 24 ♘xe4! fxe4 25 ♕xe4 Black can only play the obscure but absolutely necessary 25...♕xh3+!! (25...♘f6? 26 ♕e7+ ♔g6 27 ♖hg1+ +– or 25...♘e5? 26 ♕f4+ ♔e8 27 ♖xe5+! dxe5 28 ♕xe5+ ♔d8 29 ♕f6+ ♔d7 30 ♖e1 +–) 26 ♔xh3 ♘f6+ 27 ♔h4! ♘xe4 28 ♖xe4 ♖g6?! (28...♖g2!?) 29 ♖f4+ ♖f6 30 ♗g5 ♖f5 31 ♖xf5+ ♗xf5 32 ♗f4 ♗d3 33 ♗xd6 ♗xc4 34 ♖d1, even if this gives White good winning chances. Plan **C** (0 points) plays into Black's hands. After 24 f3? ♘e5! 25 ♖hg1 ♖xg1 26 ♖xg1 ♕xa2 only Black can be better. Plan **A** (8 points) is the second-best choice and should merely give White somewhat better chances in a complicated position. Unfortunately, this was the path that I chose. The game continued:

24 ♖hg1?! ♖g6? *(D)*

Black missed the correct defence: 24...♘e5! 25 ♖xg8 ♔xg8 26 ♖g1+ ♘g6 27 ♗f4 ♖a6 28 ♕b1! ±.

W

25 ♗f4?

But now the thematic sacrifice was even stronger! After 25 ♘xe4! fxe4 26 ♕xe4 ♕xh3+ (26...♘e5 27 ♕f4+ ♔e8 28 ♕f8+ ♔d7 29 ♖xg6 hxg6 30 ♕g7+ ♔e8 31 ♖xe5+ dxe5 32 ♕f8+ ♔d7 33 ♕f7+ ♔d6 34 ♗f8#) 27 ♔xh3 ♘f6+ 28 ♕e6+ ♗xe6+ 29 dxe6+ ♔e8 (29...♔e7 30 ♖xg6 hxg6 31 ♗g5 +– ♖xa2? 32 ♗xf6+ ♔xf6 33 e7) 30 ♖xg6 hxg6 31 ♗f4 White should win without much trouble.

25...♖a6

Another possibility is 25...♘e5!? 26 ♕d1 ♕xa2 (26...♘d3!? 27 ♕h5! ♕b2! {27...♘xf4?? 28 ♕xh7+ ♔f6 29 ♖xg6+ ♘xg6 30 ♖g1 +–} 28 ♕xh7+ ♕g7 29 ♕xg7+ ♔xg7 30 ♖xg6+ ♔xg6 31 ♖g1+ ♔h5 32 ♗xd6 ♖xa2 33 ♘b3

♖xf2+ 34 ♔g2 ♖xg2+ 35 ♔xg2 ♗a6 36 ♘xc5 ♗xc4 37 ♘xd3 exd3 38 ♗b4 ♗xd5+ 39 ♔g3 =) 27 ♕h5 ♘f3+ 28 ♔h1 ♘xg1 29 ♕xh7+ ♖g7 30 ♕h5+ ♔g8 31 ♕e8+ with perpetual check. White cannot afford any winning try.

26 ♕d1 ♘f6 27 ♕b1! ♘h5! 28 ♕b8 ♘xf4 29 ♕c7+ ♔f6 30 ♕d8+ ♔f7 31 ♕c7+ ♔f6 32 ♖xg6+ hxg6?

Also bad is 32...♔xg6?? 33 ♖g1+ +–, but 32...♘xg6! 33 ♕xc8 ♕xa2 34 ♕e6+ ♔g7 35 ♖e2 leads to unclear play and is the only acceptable continuation for Black.

33 ♕d8+

White thought that he couldn't hope for more than a draw. Time-trouble played an important role, as there wasn't enough time to examine the various possibilities carefully enough. 33 ♖e3! ♕a5 34 ♕xc8 ♖a8 *(D)* (34...♕xd2?? 35 ♕f8+ ♔g5 {35...♔e5 36 ♕g7#} 36 ♖g3+ ♔h4 37 ♕f6+ ♔h5 38 ♕g5#) is the correct continuation.

W

Then, 35 ♕d7? even loses, to 35...♕xd2 36 ♕xd6+ ♔g5 37 h4+ ♔g4, but again with the thematic sacrifice 35 ♘xe4+!! fxe4 36 ♕g4 ♘h5 37 ♖xe4 ♕d2 (37...♖g8 38 ♖e6+ ♔f7 39 ♕f3+ ♔g7 40 ♖e7+ ♔h6 41 ♕e3+ g5 42 ♕e6+ ♖g6 43 ♕c8 g4 44 h4 g3+ 45 ♔h1 ♕c3 46 ♕f8+ +–) 38 ♖e6+ ♔f7 39 ♕xg6+ ♔f8 40 ♕f5+ ♔g8 41 ♖g6+ ♘g7 42 ♕e6+ ♔h7 43 ♕f7 ♖g8 44 ♖g4 ♕h6 45 ♕e7 +– enables White to collect the full point. I was unsure about all this and, since the game was played in a team event, (wrongly) preferred to take the draw. Things like that can happen in any game where the mind is not clear and the time is short.

33...♔f7 34 ♕c7+ ♔f6 35 ♕d8+ ♔f7 36 ♕c7+ ♔f6 ½-½

Test 50

Plan **C** (20 points) is the best one, and highlights the secret of such positions: knights can prove better pieces than bishops here. Of course, we should not underestimate Plan **A** (17 points), because Black retains the option of a potential ...♗xe2, but we should not embrace Plan **B** (10 points), although objectively it doesn't change the position's evaluation too much. A lot of positions are equal, but because of the difference in the strength of the various plans available, as well as the implementation of the appropriate exchanges, they can turn out very pleasantly.

The game continued:

14...♗xe2! 15 ♖xe2 ♘xd4 16 ♘xd4 cxd4 17 ♕xd4 ♕b6!?

17...♗c5 18 ♕d3 is equal.

18 ♗e3

18 ♕xb6!? is also playable: 18...♖xb6! 19 ♗e3 (19 a3?! bxa3 20 b3 ♖a6 ∓) 19...♗c5 20 ♗xc5 ♘xc5 =.

18...♗c5 19 ♕d2 ♗xe3 20 ♖xe3 ♖fc8 21 f5!

The correct idea, seeking counterplay in the right direction. There was no time for delay: 21 ♖e2 g6! ∓.

21...♕c7!?

21...exf5 22 e6 fxe6 23 ♖xe6 ♕c5 24 ♕xd5 ♕xd5 25 ♗xd5 ♔f8 = was not to Black's liking.

22 fxe6?

White should refrain from this immediate exchange, which reduces his pressure on the kingside. 22 ♖e2! is correct: 22...exf5 (22...♘xe5?! 23 fxe6 fxe6 24 ♕e3) 23 ♗xd5 ♘f8 24 ♖f1 g6 25 g4 ♖e8 26 gxf5 ♖xe5 27 ♖xe5 ♕xe5+ 28 ♕f4 ♕xf4+ 29 ♖xf4 ♖b5 30 ♗e4 ♖e5 31 ♗d3 a5, with equal chances.

22...fxe6 23 ♖e2

Worse is 23 ♖c1?! ♖f8 24 ♕d4 ♖f5 ∓.

23...♖f8! 24 ♖d1?!

24 ♖ae1 a5 ∓ should have been preferred.

24...♔h8?!

Not, of course, 24...a5? 25 ♗xd5!, but after 24...♘xe5! 25 ♕e3 ♖f5 26 ♖d4 (26 ♖f1 ♖h5! 27 ♔h1 ♖e8 ∓) 26...♖bf8 27 ♖xb4 ♖8f6 Black can claim a significant advantage.

25 ♕g5 ♕c5! *(D)*

Covering the important e7-square, while retaining the pressure on the white e5-pawn. Instead, 25...♘b6?! 26 ♕g4 ♕e7 27 ♕d4 ♘c4 28 b3 ♘b6 29 c3 bxc3 30 ♖c1 ∞ would be a step in the wrong direction.

W

26 ♕g4 ♕e7

26...♖f5? 27 ♖xd5 ♕c7 28 ♖d6 ♘xe5 29 ♕d4 ♘f3+ 30 ♗xf3 ♖xf3 31 ♖g2 ∞ is hardly positive for Black.

27 ♖d4?!

The only move was 27 ♖d3.

27...a5?!

Again Black failed to find the strong continuation 27...♖f5! 28 ♖xd5 h5 29 ♖xd7 ♕xd7 30 ♕c4 a5 ∓.

28 ♖f4 ♖xf4! 29 ♕xf4

After 29 gxf4 ♖f8 30 h4 ♘c5 31 ♗h3 ♕f7 32 ♖f2 a4 Black also holds a pleasant and safe advantage.

29...♖f8 30 ♕e3 ♕c5 31 ♕d3

A queen exchange by 31 ♕xc5 ♘xc5 32 h4 ♘a4 33 ♗h3 ♖e8 34 b3 ♘c3 35 ♖f2 ♔g8 −+ would be a disaster for White.

31...♕c7

31...♖f5!? 32 ♕a6 ♘f8 33 ♕d3 ♔g8 ∓ is also good.

32 ♕a6 ♘c5 33 ♕b5 h6!

Not falling into the trap with 33...♖b8?! 34 ♖f2 ♔g8 35 ♕e2.

34 ♖e3 ♘d7 *(D)*

34...♖f2!? 35 ♖e2 ♖f5 ∓.

W

35 ♖e2?!

White should opt for 35 ♕e2 ♖f5 36 ♕a6 ♕b6 (36...♘b6!? 37 ♖e1 ♖f2 ∓; 36...♕xc2? 37 ♕xe6 d4 38 ♖e1 ♖f2 39 ♕d5 d3 40 e6 d2 41 exd7 dxe1♕ 42 d8♕+ ♔h7 43 ♕5g8+ ♔g6 44 ♕b6+ ♖f6 45 ♕b7 ♕xg2+ 46 ♕xg2 ♖f2 47 ♕e8+ =) 37 ♕e2 ♕c5 ∓, although his position is far from good.

35...♘xe5 36 ♕a6 ♖f6

Black's best course is probably 36...♘f3+ 37 ♗xf3 ♖xf3 38 ♖g2 ♕e5 −+.

37 b3 ♘c6 38 ♕d3 ♕d6

38...♕b6 39 ♗xd5 ♘d4! 40 ♖e3 ♖f2+ 41 ♔h1 ♖xc2 −+.

39 c4 bxc3 40 ♕xc3 e5? *(D)*

The safest was 40...♖f5 41 ♕d2 a4 42 bxa4 ♘e5 −+. Now White gets some play, as his bishop finds some targets.

W

41 ♖d2 d4 42 ♕c4

42 ♕xc6 ♕xc6 43 ♗xc6 ♖xc6 44 ♔g2 ♖c3 −+ is no help to White, but maybe he should try 42 ♕d3!? ∓.

42...♘e7!?

A nice idea, intending to attack White's bishop when it comes to e4 (...♘g8-f6), allowing Black's central pawns to advance to good effect.

43 ♗e4 ♖f8 44 ♖c2 ♘g8 45 ♕b5?

White had to seek survival chances in the endgame with 45 ♕c5! ♕xc5 (45...♕b8 46 ♕xa5 ♘f6 47 ♕e1 ∓) 46 ♖xc5 ♖f2+ 47 ♔g1 ♖e2! (47...♖xa2? 48 ♖c8) 48 ♗f5 e4! 49 ♖xa5 (49 ♖c8 d3 wins for Black) 49...d3 50 ♔f1 g5 ∓, although his mission would remain difficult. After the text-move, his position collapsed fairly quickly.

45...♘f6 46 ♕d3 ♘xe4 47 ♕xe4 d3 48 ♖c6 ♕d7 0-1

Test 51

All these plans are at least quite good for Black, but some are better than others! Plan **A** (20 points) is OK and Plan **C** (27 points) is the one employed in the game. But even better, if only slightly, is Plan **B** (30 points).

The game continued:

13...♗e6 14 ♕h5+

White had nothing better. The presence of queens on the board cannot be bad for Black.

14...♕xh5 15 ♗xh5+ ♔e7 16 b3?!

Although the text seems to be a natural move, preparing to develop with tempo (17 ♗a3+), 16 ♘d2!? ♖hg8 17 g3 ♖ad8 18 ♔e2 f5 ∓ was preferable.

16...♗d5 17 ♗a3+ ♔e6 *(D)*

W

18 ♗g4+

The alternative was 18 ♗f3 e4 19 ♗g4+ f5 20 ♗e2 (20 ♗h3 e3 21 ♔e2 ♗e4 22 ♗c1 ♖ad8 23 ♗xe3 f1♕+! 24 ♖xf1 ♗d3+ 25 ♔f2 ♗xe3+ 26 ♔xe3 ♗xf1 −+) 20...♖ad8 21 ♔c2 e3 −+.

18...f5 19 ♗h3 ♖hg8 20 ♘d2

After 20 ♔e2, a typical variation could go 20...♗xg2 21 ♗xg2 ♖xg2 22 ♖f1 ♖xh2 23 ♘d2 ♖g8 24 ♘c4 ♖g4 25 ♘xb6 ♖e4+ 26 ♔f3 axb6 27 ♗c1 ♖e1 28 ♖xf2 e4+ 29 ♔g3 ♖hh1 30 ♖c2 ♖hg1+ 31 ♔h2 f4 −+.

20...♗xg2 21 ♗xg2 ♖xg2 22 ♖f1

22 ♔e2 f1♕++ 23 ♔xf1 ♖xd2 −+.

22...♖d8 23 ♔e2 ♖xd2+

The simple 23...e4 24 ♘c4 f4 25 ♘xb6 f3+ 26 ♔e3 ♔f5!! 27 ♖ad1 ♖xd1 28 ♖xd1 ♖g1 −+ is also sufficient.

24 ♔xd2 e4 25 ♗f8

Or 25 c4 ♗d4 26 ♖ad1 f4 −+. White tries a smart plan (♗f8, b4 and ♗c5) to force an exchange of the annoying b6-bishop.

25...f4 26 b4

26 ♗h6 ♔f5 27 h4 e3+ 28 ♔e2 ♔e4 29 ♗xf4 ♔xf4 −+.

26...♖g5?

26...e3+ 27 ♔e2 ♔f5 28 ♗c5 ♔e4 29 ♗xe3 ♗xe3 −+ was simplest.

27 ♗c5? *(D)*

White goes on with his plan, but he should prefer 27 a4! f3! 28 ♗h6 e3+ 29 ♔c2 ♖g2 30 ♗xe3 (30 a5? e2 31 axb6 e1♕ −+) 30...♗xe3 31 ♔d3 ♗g5 ∓.

B

27...♖xc5!

Pawns are better than rooks? Well, sometimes yes!

28 bxc5 ♗xc5 29 ♖ab1 f3 30 ♖b4 ♔f5!

Better than 30...e3+?! 31 ♔d3 e2 32 ♖e4+ ♔d6 33 ♖xe2 fxe2 34 ♔xe2 ∓.

31 ♖d4 ♗xd4 32 cxd4 ♔f4 0-1

White resigned due to 33 ♖xf2 e3+ 34 ♔e1 exf2+ 35 ♔xf2 ♔e4.

Test 52

Plan **A** (3 points) does not look bad; alas, it deprives White of a useful plan on the other side of the board. Plan **B** (10 points) gives White a slight plus, but still things look far from easy, as Black can set up an appropriate defence. Plan **C** (30 points) shows the correct handling of such endgames and is a model treatment.

The game continued:

22 g4! ♔e7

Black must sit and wait. 22...g5?! is even worse, as White can reply 23 ♘e2 followed by h4 and ♘g3-f5, increasing his advantage.

23 h4 b5

A forced move, to meet the threat of ♗c2-b3 by placing the knight on b6. However, this move further weakens the queenside dark squares.

24 h5

White's initiative on the kingside is dangerous, but there is also a threat to Black's centre involving an eventual ♗c2-b3 followed by g5. The immediate 24 ♗c2?! ♘d7 25 ♗b3 ♘b6 would allow Black to consolidate.

24...♘d7 25 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 26 ♖h1!

As White cannot use the c-file effectively, he switches to the h-file, which may prove even more valuable.

26...♘f8

26...♘b6? is unplayable: 27 hxg6 hxg6 28 ♘xg6+! fxg6 29 ♖h7+ +–.

27 hxg6 hxg6 28 ♔e2

By stationing his king on d2, White not only neutralizes the enemy rook but also renews the threat of ♗c2-b3. Black must cover the invasion squares of the white rook, leaving his knight to defend the weak d5-pawn.

28...♔f6 29 ♔d2 ♔g7 30 ♖c1!

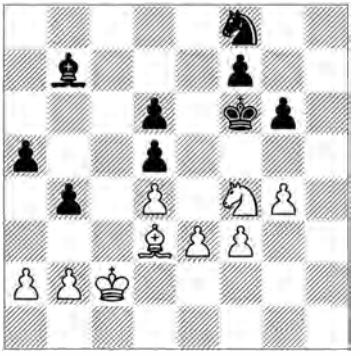
As the black king is far away, this was the right moment for the white king to invade on the queenside and especially to a5, which Black weakened with his forced 23rd move.

30..♖xc1 31 ♔xc1 ♔f6 32 ♔d2 b4

If 32...♗c6 (preparing 33...a5) then 33 a4! +– would do the job.

33 ♔c2 a5 *(D)*

W



34 ♗b5!

The last important move, after which Black cannot prevent the white king from penetrating his queenside.

34...♘e6 35 ♘xe6 fxe6 36 ♔b3 ♔g5 37 ♔a4 e5 38 ♔xa5 exd4 39 exd4 ♔f4 40 ♗d7! ♔e3 41 ♔b6 ♗a8 42 ♔a7 ♔xd4 43 f4! 1-0

Test 53

Plan **C** (0 points) actually implies fishing around without any concrete purpose. Although at first sight it looks good, it just spoils White's position. Plan **B** (5 points) is naïve and, although it keeps a slight advantage, Black should certainly be happy to face it. That he chose the strong and very effective Plan **A** (30 points) shows the strength of the young Kasparov!

The game continued:

14 d5! exd5 15 ♗g2 c6 16 0-0 f6

Other moves are hardly better:

a) 16...f5?! 17 ♘f3! ♕e7 18 ♘e5 ♕e6 19 a4! ±.

b) 16...♘c8?! 17 ♖e1 ♗f5 18 e4 dxe4 19 ♘xe4 ♗e6 20 ♕h5 ♖g8 21 ♘f6+!! gxf6 22 ♖xe6+ ♘e7 (22...dxe6 23 ♗xc6+ ♔e7 24 ♗xa8 +–) 23 ♗xf6 (23 ♖xf6 ♖g6 24 ♖e1 ♖xf6 25 ♗xf6 d5 26 ♗h3 ♕d6 27 ♗e6 +–) 23...dxe6 24 ♗xc6+ ♘xc6 25 ♗xd8 ♘xd8 26 ♕xb5+ +–.

17 ♖e1!

Much better than the immediate 17 e4?! dxe4 18 ♗xe4 ♗f7! ∞.

17...♗e7?!

Black should try 17...♔f7, although after 18 e4 dxe4 19 ♘xe4 ♗f5 20 h5 White's position is clearly preferable.

18 ♕g4! ♔f7 19 h5 ♗h7 20 e4 dxe4 21 ♗xe4!

Exchanging light-squared bishops would allow White access to the important g6-square.

21...♗xe4 22 ♘xe4

22 ♖xe4 ♖f8 23 ♕g6+ ♔g8 24 ♖g4 ♖f7 25 ♕xh6 ± is also good.

22...♘c8

Probably the only defence, as 22...♖f8?! 23 ♖ad1 d5 24 ♘xf6! +– and 22...♖e8 23 ♕g6+ ♔f8 24 g4! ♘c8 25 g5 +– are too easy.

23 ♖ad1 ♖a7?! *(D)*

A slip in an already bad position can be truly fatal. 23...♘b6 24 ♘c5 ♗xc5 25 ♕g6+ ♔f8 26 bxc5 ♘d5 27 ♖e4 ± was the only try.

24 ♘xf6!! gxf6

Forced: 24...♗xf6?! 25 ♕g6+ ♔f8 26 ♗xf6 gxf6 27 ♖e6 +–.

25 ♕g6+ ♔f8 26 ♗c1!

A very difficult but highly effective idea! White's position was so good that he could also play 26 ♖xe7 ♕xe7 27 ♗xf6 ♕h7 28 ♗xh8 ♕xg6 29 hxg6 +–.

26...d5

Or 26...♕e8 27 ♗xh6+ ♖xh6 28 ♕xh6+ ♔f7 29 ♕g6+ ♔f8 30 ♕g4 +–.

27 ♖d4!

W

More pieces are joining the attack! The immediate 27 ♗xh6+? is wrong: 27...♖xh6 28 ♕xh6+ ♔g8! 29 ♖d4 ♗f8! ∞.

27...♘d6 28 ♖g4 ♘f7 29 ♗xh6+! ♔e8

29...♖xh6 30 ♕g8# or 29...♘xh6 30 ♕g7+ ♔e8 31 ♕xh8+ ♔d7 32 ♕xh6 +–.

30 ♗g7 1-0

Black resigned due to 30...♖g8 31 h6 and White wins.

Test 54

Plan **A** (0 points) is out of the question, as it completely misses the target. After 35 ♖b7 ♖d5 36 ♔g3 White can drum up enough counterplay to maintain the equilibrium. Plan **B** (10 points) is certainly a better choice, giving Black a clear advantage. But Plan **C** (30 points) enables Black to play effectively a piece up, as the g2-bishop is completely buried.

Play continued:

30...g6! 31 g4 h4!

The miserable g2-bishop will never again participate in the game, and victory for Black cannot be far away.

32 b5 axb5 33 axb5 ♔f8 34 ♖c4 ♔e7 35 gxf5 gxf5 *(D)*

W

Now Black can calmly win back his pawn and then even exchange rooks or, in general, win as he pleases. White decided to commit suicide!

36 ♗xe4 fxe4 37 ♖xe4 0-1

Test 55

Plan **A** (0 points) does not work, as Black is not obliged to exchange on f3. Instead, 15...♖b8 or 15...♕d7 will leave White at a loss. Plan **B** (10 points) is not bad in general, but gives Black a chance to restrict White's plus. Plan **C** (30 points) is strongest.

The game continued:

15 ♗xe5! dxe5

Black had no choice, as after 15...♗xe5? 16 ♘xe5 dxe5 17 d6 exd6 18 ♕xd6 he cannot play 18...♘e6 19 ♗xe6 fxe6 20 ♕xe5 +–.

16 d6! exd6

Also forced: 16...♘e6? 17 ♗xe6 fxe6 18 d7 ♖f8 19 ♕g5 +–.

17 ♘g5!?

17 ♕xd6 is good enough for a clear advantage: 17...♘e6 18 ♗xe6 fxe6 19 a5! ♕xd6 20 ♖xd6 b5 (20...bxa5 21 ♖a1 ±) 21 ♖b6 ♗c8 22 ♖d1 ±.

17...d5!

Black avoids 17...♖f8? 18 ♕xd6 ♕xg5 (or 18...♕xd6 19 ♖xd6 ♗c8 20 ♖c6 +–) 19 ♕xc7 b5 20 axb5 axb5 21 ♗xb5 ±.

18 exd5 h6!

Black is perched over the abyss and continues to find the best moves. Not 18...♗h6? 19 ♘xf7! ♗xd2 20 ♘xd8 ♗xe1 (20...♗xc3 21 ♘xb7 ♗xe1 22 d6+ ♔h8 23 dxc7 ♗a5 24 ♖d7 b5 25 ♘xa5 bxc4 26 ♘b7 ♖g8 27 ♘d6 +–) 21 ♘xb7 ♗xc3 (21...b5 22 axb5 axb5 23 ♘xb5 +–) 22 d6+ ♔f8 (22...♘e6 23 bxc3 ♔f7 24 d7 +–) 23 dxc7 ♗a5 24 ♘xa5 bxa5 25 ♖d7 +–.

19 ♘ge4

The over-optimistic 19 ♘xf7? would turn out badly after 19...♔xf7 20 d6+ ♘e6 21 d7 ♖e7 22 ♕d6 ♖a7 23 ♖d3 ♗a8 24 ♘e4 ♗xe4 25 ♖xe4 ♕xd7 (25...♗f6!? 26 f4 ♕xd7 27 fxe5 ♗g5 28 ♕b8 ∞) 26 ♕b8 ♖b7! 27 ♕a8 ♖a7 =. However, 19 d6!? is an interesting alternative, as after 19...hxg5 20 dxc7 ♕xc7 21 ♕xg5 ♖ad8 22 ♕xg6 ♖d4 23 ♗a2 ♖ed8 24 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 25 ♖e3 ♔f8 26 ♕h7 ♕d6 White has the a-pawn and Black some compensation due to his well-placed pieces.

19...♖b8 20 ♗a2!

With the idea of 21 a5.

20...♗a8

Black rejects the passive position arising after 20...a5?! 21 ♗c4 ♔h7 22 d6 ♘e6 23 ♘b5 (23 d7? ♖e7 ∞) 23...♗xe4 24 ♖xe4 ♕d7 25 c3 ±.

21 d6

A more secure advantage could be obtained with the simple 21 a5! bxa5 22 d6 ♘b5 23 ♘a4.

21...♘e6 22 ♘d5? *(D)*

Wrong! White can preserve an advantage with the typical 22 a5.

B

22...♔h8?!

Black had to make a hard decision. 22...♔f8?! 23 ♘df6! ♗xf6 24 d7 ♗xe4 25 dxe8♕+ ♕xe8 26 ♖xe4 ± and 22...♔h7?! 23 ♘e7 ♕d7 24 ♗d5 f5 25 ♗xa8 ♖xa8 26 ♘d5! ♕d8 27 d7 ♖f8 28 ♘d6 ♖b8 29 c3 ± are also unpleasant, but Black could retain fair drawing chances with 22...♗xd5! 23 ♕xd5 ♕d7 24 a5 b5! (24...bxa5? 25 ♕d2! ±) 25 ♘xc5 ♘xc5 26 ♕xc5 ♖bc8 27 ♕d5 ♖xc2 28 ♖c1 ♖ec8! (not 28...♖xc1? 29 ♖xc1 ♖e6 30 ♖c7 ♕xd6 31 ♕b7 +–) 29 ♖xc2 ♖xc2 30 f4 ♔h7. These variations are long and would have been difficult to calculate over the board.

23 ♘e7! ♖b7?!

Better is 23...♗xe4 (23...♖xe7 24 dxe7 ♕xe7 25 ♕d6 ♕xd6 26 ♘xd6 +–) 24 ♗xe6 ♖xe7 25 dxe7 ♕xe7 26 ♖xe4 ♕xe6 27 ♕d7 ±.

24 ♗xe6 fxe6 25 ♘xg6+ ♔h7 26 ♘e7 c4

Or 26...♖d7 27 ♕e2 +–.

27 ♕e2 b5?

Black's position was lost anyway, but allowing a mate can be considered a mistake nevertheless.

28 ♘g5+! 1-0

Black resigned, faced with 28...hxg5 29 ♕h5+ ♗h6 30 ♕g6+ ♔h8 31 ♕xh6#.

Test 56

Plan **A** (5 points) in a way helps Black as White voluntarily closes down the h-file, when Black might have his share of counterplay. Plan **C** (0 points) is inadequate, as it gives Black compensation for the pawn after 14...♕c7!. White should really care about Black's counterplay, so by using Plan **B** (30 points) he manages to obtain a much better position.

The game continued:

12 ♗g5! ♕e7

As mentioned, 12...c6? is inadequate: 13 e5! (13 ♕xd6?! ♕a5 with compensation) 13...dxe5 14 ♕xd8 ♖axd8 15 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 16 ♘e4 ♘xe4 17 ♗xd8 ♗h6+ 18 ♔b1 ♘f2 19 ♖g1 ♗e3 20 ♗e2.

13 g4 ♕f8 14 ♔b1

The immediate 14 h4 ♘d7 15 h5 is also possible, but White is not in a hurry!

14...a6 15 h4 *(D)*

B

15...h6

Black is ill-advised to play 15...h5? 16 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 17 gxh5 gxh5 18 ♖g1+ ♔h7 19 ♘d5 ♗xd5 20 ♕xd5 ♖e5 21 ♕b3 b5 22 f4 ♖e6 23 ♕f3 +–, but 15...♘d7!? is a serious alternative: 16 h5 ♘e5 17 ♗e2 h6 18 ♗e3 g5 19 f4 ±.

16 ♗xf6! ♗xf6 17 g5 hxg5

Or 17...♗g7 18 h5! hxg5 19 ♗h3 ♖ad8 20 hxg6 fxg6 21 ♕xg5 +–.

18 hxg5 ♗g7

18...♗xc3 19 ♕xc3 ♕g7 20 ♕xc7 is winning for White.

19 f4

19 ♗d3! c6 20 ♕h2 ♕e7 21 ♕h7+ ♔f8 22 f4 +– looks like a better continuation for White.

Still, the text-move does not spoil White's position.

19...♗g4 20 ♖e1!

Correct! 20 ♗e2?! ♗xe2 21 ♕xe2 ♕e7 ± is not quite as good.

20...c6

20...♗xc3 is not a solution either, as after 21 ♕xc3 ♕g7 22 ♕g3! ♗h5 23 ♗c4 ♕d4 24 ♗d5 c6 25 c3 ♕c5 26 ♗b3 it is quite unlikely that Black will survive.

21 ♗e2! ♗xe2 22 ♖xe2 f5

A desperate try, giving the black king an escape-route, but alas Black does not even come close to using it. The alternative was 22...d5 23 e5 ♕b4 24 ♖eh2 ♖ad8 25 ♖h7 +–.

23 gxf6 ♕xf6 *(D)*

W

24 ♖g1!

A difficult decision, but there is nothing more to expect from the h-file. The new (and important) target is the pawn on g6 and in general the g-file.

24...♖f8

Or 24...♕d4 25 ♕c1.

25 ♖g4 ♖ae8 26 ♖eg2 ♖e7 27 a3! a5 28 ♕d3 ♖ff7 29 e5!

As White has placed all his pieces optimally, the final assault begins.

29...dxe5

29...♕f5 is no better: 30 ♕xd6 ♖d7 31 ♕c5 +–.

30 ♘e4 ♕e6

The other queen move, 30...♕f5, also loses: 31 ♕d8+ ♗f8 32 ♖xg6+ ♖g7 33 ♖f6 +–.

31 ♖xg6 ♕c8

31...♕d5 32 ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 33 ♘f6+ and 31...♕f5 32 ♕d8+ ♔h7 33 ♖6g4 are also hopeless for Black.

32 ♘d6 1-0

After 32...e4 33 ♕b3 all hope for Black has evaporated.

Test 57

Plan **B** (0 points) is bad, as Black can sacrifice the exchange, i.e. instead of 18...♘xe5? he can try 18...♖xe5! 19 fxe5 ♘xe5, when he can feel satisfied. Plan **C** (10 points) is not that bad, but it offers only a slight advantage for White in the final position, as many pieces have been exchanged and the pawn-majority has not yet started to roll forward. That's why Plan **A** (30 points) is the best choice!

The game continued:

17 ♗xf6! ♘xf6 18 e5 ♕xb2

Black's alternatives were no better: 18...♖ad8 19 ♕f3 ♕b4 20 ♗a2 ♘h7 21 ♘e4 ± or 18...♕b4 19 ♕e2 ♖ae8 20 ♖a3! ±.

19 ♖c1! ♖ad8 *(D)*

No better is 19...♘h7 20 e6 fxe6 21 ♘e4! ♗e3 22 ♖b1 ♕d4 23 ♕xd4 ♗xd4 24 ♖xb7 ♔h8 25 ♘d6 ♖a7 26 ♖xa7 ♗xa7 27 ♗xe6 ±.

W

20 ♕f3 ♘d5?!

This cannot be the solution to Black's problems. The only try was 20...♘h7 21 e6 fxe6 22 ♘e4! ♗d6 23 ♖b1 ♕a3 24 ♕g4! ♔h8 25 ♕xe6 ±, or even 20...♘h5 21 f5 ±.

21 ♘xd5 cxd5 22 ♗xd5 ♕d4

Black must exchange queens, as otherwise he could get mated. For instance, 22...♕a3 23 ♗b3 +–.

23 ♖cd1

23 ♗b3 b6 24 e6 +– is also good.

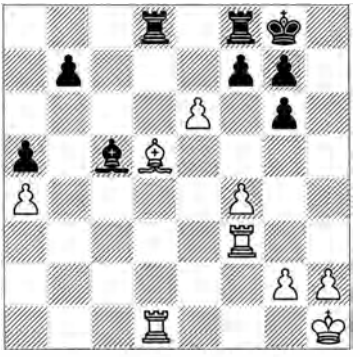
23...♕e3

Snatching the pawn with 23...♕xa4 is equally hopeless: 24 e6 ♖xd5 25 ♕xd5 b6 26 exf7+ ♖xf7 27 ♕e6 ♗f8 28 ♖d8 ♕c2 29 f5 +–.

24 ♕xe3 ♗xe3 25 ♖f3! ♗c5 26 e6 *(D)*

White has accomplished his main plan and is now winning.

B



26...♖xd5

This is the only try (not 26...fxe6? 27 ♗xe6+ ♔h7 28 ♖h3#), but still not enough to save the game.

27 ♖xd5 b6 28 exf7+ ♔xf7 29 ♖fd3 ♖c8 30 g3 ♔f6 31 ♖d7 ♖e8 32 ♔g2 ♖e4 33 ♖c7 ♖xa4 34 ♖c6+ ♔e7 35 ♖xg6 ♖a2+ 36 ♔f3 a4 37 ♖xg7+ ♔f6 38 ♖a7 a3 39 h4 b5 40 ♖a6+ ♔e7 41 ♖d5?!

41 ♖c3 ♖f2+ 42 ♔g4 ♗d6 43 ♖e3+ ♔d7 44 ♖d3 +– would have been simpler. White's position is so overwhelming that he can even afford some minor mistakes!

41...♖c2 42 ♖h5 ♔f7 43 ♖h7+ ♔g8 44 ♖b7 a2 45 ♖a8+ ♗f8 46 ♔g4 b4 47 h5 ♖h2 48 f5 1-0

Test 58

Plan **A** (5 points) is not particularly demanding and is quite drawish. Plan **B** (0 points) is inadequate as well, as after 27...b4 28 ♗f1 ♕f6 Black would even stand slightly better. The correct plan is **C** (30 points), where White in fact risks very little. He can't prove an advantage, 'only' an initiative, but Black must be on the alert to hold the balance.

The game continued:

25 ♖xd6!? ♗xd6 26 ♖xd6 ♖fe8

This is best. Alternatives like 26...♖be8? 27 ♗f1 ♗c4 28 ♗xc4 bxc4 29 ♘g6+ ♔g8 30 ♘xf8 ♖xf8 31 ♖d8 +– and 26...♗xa2? 27 ♘g6+ ♔g8 28 ♘xf8 ♖xf8 29 ♖d8 b4 30 cxb4 axb4 31 g4 ± are inferior.

27 g4! b4?!

Black should try 27...fxg4! 28 ♗xe4 ♗f5! 29 ♖f6 ♕d7 30 ♘g6+ (not 30 ♗xf5?? ♕d1+ 31 ♔g2 ♕f3+ 32 ♔g1 ♖e1#, while White should also avoid 30 ♖xf5?! ♖xe4 31 ♕f6+ ♕g7 32 ♖xb5! ♖f8 33 ♕xg7+ ♔xg7 34 ♘h5+ ♔g6 35 ♘g3 ♖a4 36 a3 ♖f6 ∓) 30...♗xg6 (30...♔g8? 31 ♗d5+ ♕xd5 32 ♖f8+ ♖xf8 33 ♘e7+ ♔h8 34 ♘xd5 ±) 31 ♖xg6 ♖e7 32 ♕f6+ ♖g7 33 ♖h6 ♔g8 34 ♖h5, when White certainly has enough compensation for the material, but the outcome remains uncertain.

28 cxb4 ♖bc8?

This is a definite mistake. After 28...♗xa2 29 gxf5 axb4 30 ♘g6+ ♔g8 31 ♗xe4 or 28...♖xb4 29 ♘xe6 ♖xe6 30 ♖d8+ ♔g7 31 gxf5 ♕xf5 32 ♖d7+ White has the initiative, but Black can defend more stubbornly.

29 h3?!

A loss of time. 29 ♘xe6! ♖xe6 30 ♖d8+ ♖xd8 31 ♕xd8+ ♔g7 32 bxa5 ± was strong.

29...fxg4 30 ♕g5!?

As 30 ♗xe4 ♖c1+ 31 ♔g2 ♗f5 (31...g3? 32 ♗xh7!! +–) 32 ♗d5 gxh3+ (with compensation) and 30 ♘xe6 ♖xe6 31 ♖xe6 ♕xe6 32 bxa5 e3 33 fxe3 ♕xe3+ 34 ♔h2 ♕e5+ 35 ♕g3 ♕xb2 = were not appealing to White, he decided to try something different.

30...gxh3?

And Black bites the hook! 30...♗xa2! 31 bxa5 gxh3 32 ♘xh3 ♖g8 33 ♕e5+ ♖g7 (with compensation) was his only acceptable try.

31 ♕e5+ ♔g8 32 ♕g5+ ♔h8 33 ♕e5+ ♔g8 34 ♗xe4! ♗xa2 35 ♕g5+ ♕g7 *(D)*

35...♔h8 is no better: 36 ♘g6+! hxg6 37 ♖xg6 +–.

W

36 ♗xh7+!! ♔h8

36...♔xh7 37 ♖g6 ♖c7 38 ♔h2! ♖b8 39 ♕h5+ ♔g8 40 ♕xa5 +– would not change the outcome.

37 ♗g6 ♖e5

Or 37...axb4 38 ♔h2 +–, and the threats are deadly.

38 ♕h4+ ♔g8 39 ♔h2! ♕e7 40 ♗h7+! ♔f7

40...♕xh7 41 ♕g4+ ♔f7 42 ♖d7+ ♖e7 43 ♖xe7+ ♔xe7 44 ♕xc8 +–.

41 ♗g6+ ♔g8 42 ♖f6! ♔g7 43 ♗f5! 1-0

Black resigned in view of 43...♖xf5 44 ♕h6+ ♔g8 45 ♖xf5, 43...♕xf6 44 ♘h5+ or 43...♔g8 44 ♖g6+ ♔f7 45 ♕h7+ ♔e8 46 ♕h8+.

Test 59

Plan **A** (0 points) even gives Black the advantage after 17...c5! 18 ♗xg6 fxg6 ∓ and is of course inadequate. Plan **B** (5 points) allows Black to equalize by 18...♘b6 19 ♗d3 ♘d5 20 ♘xd5 cxd5 21 ♘f2 ♗xd3 22 ♘xd3 ♖ac8 23 c3 g6. Plan **C** (30 points) is correct.

The game continued:

15 d5! e5

There was not much choice: 15...0-0-0?! 16 dxe6 fxe6 17 ♘d4 ♘c5 18 ♗h3 ♗f7 19 ♕c4 ♕d7 20 f4 ± or 15...0-0?! 16 dxe6 fxe6 17 ♗h3 ♘c5 18 ♘d4 ♔f7 19 ♖g3 e5 20 ♕c4+ ♔e8 21 ♘f5 ±.

16 ♗h3 0-0-0

Forced: 16...0-0? 17 dxc6 bxc6 18 ♗xd7 ♕xd7 19 ♘xe5 +–.

17 ♘d2 ♔b8 18 ♘c4 ♘b6 19 ♘xb6

Also 19 ♘e3 ± was quite OK, keeping more pieces on the board.

19...♕xb6

19...axb6?! 20 ♗f5 b5 21 ♖d3 ±.

20 ♖d3

Threatening 21 dxc6 bxc6 22 ♘d5! +–.

20...♔a8 21 a3 ♖df8 22 ♗f5!

Stopping Black's future activity on the kingside. 22 ♖gd1? f6 ∞ would not be to White's liking.

22...♗h7

Renewing the idea (planning ...g6 and ...f6 ∞).

23 ♖gd1 g6

Black should have seriously considered playing 23...c5 ±, but this was not an easy decision.

24 dxc6! bxc6!

24...gxf5? is naïve. After 25 ♘d5 ♕xc6 (or 25...♕d8 26 ♖b3 +–) White can choose between 26 ♘xe7 and 26 ♖c3, both winning.

25 ♗d7 ♕c7? *(D)*

Falling into the trap! Also bad was 25...♖d8? 26 ♖xd6! ♗xd6 27 ♖xd6 +–, but Black could stay in the game with 25...♖b8! 26 b3 ♕c7 27 ♗h3 ±.

W

26 ♗xc6+!!

An excellent sacrifice, allowing the rest of the white pieces to join a violent attack. Moreover, White is effectively not material down for the time being, as Black's extra piece is the miserable h7-bishop. It is the quality and not the quantity of the pieces that counts in chess.

26...♕xc6 27 ♘d5 ♗d8

Or 27...♕d7 28 ♖c3 ♖c8 29 ♕a6 ♕b7 30 ♕xb7+ ♔xb7 31 ♖b3+ ♔a8 32 ♘xe7 +–.

28 ♖c3 ♕b7

Other moves don't help: 28...♕d7 29 ♕a6 +–; 28...♕a4 29 ♕d3! ♔b7 30 ♘b4 +–.

29 ♖b3 ♕c6

Everything works out for White! 29...♗b6 is met by 30 a4 +–.

30 ♖dd3! ♗a5

Although Black would lose the endgame after 30...♗b6 31 ♘xb6+ axb6 32 ♖xd6 ♕xd6 33 ♕a6+ ♔b8 34 ♖xb6+ ♕xb6 35 ♕xb6+ ♔c8 36 ♕c5+ ♔b7 37 ♕e7+ ♔a8 38 b4 +–, maybe he had to play in this way, but during a game this is a hard decision to make.

31 ♖dc3! ♗xc3 32 ♕a6!!

Finishing the job in style! Black resigned in view of the forced variation 32...♖c8 33 ♘b6+ ♕xb6 (33...♔b8 34 ♘xc8+ ♔c7 35 ♖xc3 +–) 34 ♖xb6 ♖b8 35 ♖xb8+ ♖xb8 36 ♕c6+ +–.

1-0

Test 60

Pawn-majorities and minorities can give us a direction to follow when choosing a plan. It is best for White to try his hand with Plan **B** (30 points). Plan **A** (5 points) is certainly inferior and does not give Black any serious problem,

although White seems to be doing OK – that's why it receives some points. Plan **C** (15 points) is quite similar to Plan B, but White does not need to waste valuable time by moving his queen without a good reason.

The game continued:

14 f4! ♘d7?!

14...f5?! 15 ♘f2 a6 16 e4 would guarantee White a better position due to the weakness of the e6-square, but 14...♗c8!? 15 ♘f2 a6 16 g4 b5 17 g5 ♘d7 is probably a better try, as at least the white knight does not come to e4.

15 g4! a6 16 a4 ♖e8

The alternative was 16...♘f6 17 ♘f2 h6 18 h4 g5 19 hxg5 hxg5 20 e3 ±.

17 g5 ♗f8 18 ♔h1! b5!?

An interesting pawn sacrifice, aimed at getting some counterplay. A passive reaction, such as 18...g6 19 ♗h3 or 18...♖b8 19 b3, wouldn't change the evaluation (±).

19 axb5 axb5 20 ♘xb5 ♕b6 *(D)*

Or 20...♘b6 21 ♘bc3 ♘c4 22 ♕d3 ♗a6 (22...♘xb2? 23 ♕b5 +–) 23 ♕g3, with the idea 24 f5, g6 ±.

W

21 ♘bc3

Better than 21 ♘a3?! ♗a6! with some counterplay.

21...♕b4

21...♗a6 is answered with 22 ♖f3, intending ♖h3 and ♕e1-h4.

22 ♕d3 ♘b6 23 ♕g3! ♔h8

23...♘xd5? is inadequate due to 24 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 25 ♘f6+ gxf6 26 gxf6+ ♔h8 27 ♗xd5 +–.

24 ♖cd1 ♘c4

Alternatives like 24...♘a4 25 ♖b1 or 24...♗c8 25 f5 ♖e5 26 g6 ♗xf5 27 ♘g5! were not of much help either.

25 b3!

White is playing really strongly! 25 f5 ♘e5! would allow Black some chances.

25...♘b6 26 g6!

Not, of course, 26 f5?! ♖a3 27 g6 f6!.

26...fxg6

Black did not have much choice: 26...hxg6 27 ♕h4+ ♔g8 28 ♘g5 +– or 26...f6 27 gxh7, with ♘xf6 coming.

27 f5 gxf5 28 ♖xf5 ♘d7 29 ♖df1!

29 ♘xd6? would only assist Black after 29...♗xd6 30 ♕xd6 ♕xc3! (30...♘f8? 31 ♕g3 ♘g6 32 e4 ±) 31 ♕xd7 ♗a6 32 ♖df1 ♖g8 33 d6 ♗xe2 ∞.

29...♘e5 30 ♖5f4

It is too early for 30 ♘g5 ♕g4 31 ♖xe5?! ♕xg3 32 ♖xe8 ♕xg2+! 33 ♔xg2 ♖xe8 ∞.

30...♕b6

30...♘g6 31 ♖g4 ♗c8 32 ♖xg6 hxg6 33 ♕xg6, with ♘g5 +– to follow, would not solve Black's problems.

31 ♘g5 ♘g6 *(D)*

31...♗e7 also loses: 32 ♘f7+ ♘xf7 33 ♖xf7 ♗f8 34 ♗e4 ♔g8 35 ♗xh7+ ♔xh7 36 ♖g1 +–.

W

Now White can crown his efforts with a nice and very effective combination.

32 ♘f7+ ♔g8 33 ♕xg6! 1-0

Black resigned due to 33...hxg6 34 ♖h4, with mate to follow on h8.

Test 61

Plan **A** (0 points) is a bad idea, as Black will enjoy an excellent middlegame after 18...♘e5!. What is more important, White has not managed to exchange any pieces. Plan **C** (20 points) is a standard one, which most chess-players would go for, but the availability of the excellent Plan **B** (30 points) relegates it to second

choice. Let's see how this plan worked in practice:

15 ♘h4! ♕d6

15...♗xe2 16 ♘xe2 ♘e4 17 ♘f5 is pleasant for White.

16 g3 ♗g6?

Black had to play the modest 16...♗xe2 17 ♘xe2 ♘e7 18 ♕d3 ±. White could rely on his slight but secure advantage.

17 ♘b5

17 ♘xg6!? hxg6 18 ♗f3 ♖fd8 19 ♗g2 ± is also good for White.

17...♕e6 18 ♗xf6 ♕xf6

Inadequate was 18...gxf6 19 ♗g4 f5 20 ♗f3, guaranteeing Black a slow but certain death!

19 ♘xg6 hxg6 20 ♗g4?

White misses his chance. He should play the not so difficult 20 ♕xd5! ♕b2 21 ♗c4 ♕xa2 22 ♕d7 ♖cd8 23 ♕xb7 ±.

20...♖cd8 21 ♘d4 ♗e5?

White would retain a slight advantage after 21...♘e5?! 22 ♔g2 ♖fe8 23 ♖c2, but it was time for Black to equalize with 21...♘xd4! 22 ♕xd4 ♕xd4 23 exd4 ♖fe8.

22 ♘xc6! bxc6 23 ♕d3! ♖d6

The opposite-coloured bishops do not guarantee the draw. Black's central pawn-chain is really weak and White can benefit from it. 23...d4?! is even less satisfactory in view of 24 e4, with the idea ♖c4, f4 and e5.

24 ♔g2?!

Although this does not spoil White's advantage, 24 ♖c5! is more to the point: 24...♕e7 (24...♗b2 25 ♖b1 ♗a3? 26 b4 +–) 25 ♖fc1 ♕b7 26 ♕c2 ±.

24...♕e7 25 ♖c5! ♕b7 26 ♖fc1 ♗b2! 27 ♖1c2 ♗a3 28 ♖a5 ♗b4 29 ♖a4 ♖f6 *(D)*

W

30 e4!?

30 a3 ♗e7 31 b4 and ♕a6 was also very strong, but White wanted to weaken the black d5-pawn further.

30...♖e8

Or 30...dxe4 31 ♕xe4 ♖b8 32 ♖c4 c5 33 ♕xb7 ♖xb7 34 ♗f3 ♖e7 35 a3 ♗d2 36 ♖xc5 ±.

31 exd5 cxd5 32 ♗f3 ♖d8 33 a3! ♗e7 34 ♖a5 ♖f5 35 b4

White's advantage is obvious as the vital black pawn will fall.

35...♕b6 36 ♖a6

One cannot really criticize this move, but White could have played the stronger 36 ♖xd5! ♖fxd5 37 ♗xd5 a5 38 ♕c4 axb4 39 ♗xf7+ ♔h7 40 ♖e2 ♗f6 41 ♕e4 ♗g5 42 axb4 +–.

36...♕b8 37 ♕d4! ♗f6

Or 37...♕b5 38 ♖xa7 ♗f6 39 ♕d1, with ♖a5 +– to come.

38 ♕xa7 ♕e5 39 ♕e3 ♕a1

Exchanging queens with 39...♕xe3 40 fxe3 would not trouble White: 40...♖e5 41 b5 ♖xe3 42 b6 ♖b3 43 a4 +–.

40 ♕c1 ♕e5 41 ♖e2 ♕b8 42 ♕c2! ♖xf3!?

A last attempt to muddy the waters with some tactics. 42...d4 loses to 43 ♕d3.

43 ♔xf3 d4 44 ♕c6! d3 45 ♖d2 ♗g5 46 ♖d1 ♔h7 47 ♔g2 d2 48 ♕f3! ♖d7

Or 48...♖e8 49 ♕xf7 ♖e1 50 ♖xg6 ♕a8+ 51 f3 ♗h6 (51...♕g8 52 ♕xg8+ ♔xg8 53 ♖xg5 ♖xd1 54 ♖d5 +–) 52 ♖xh6+ ♔xh6 53 ♖xd2 +–.

49 ♖a5 ♕d8 50 ♖a8 ♕c7 51 ♖e8 ♕c2 52 b5 ♖d3

52...♖c7 53 ♕a8 +–.

53 ♕xf7 ♗f6 54 ♕g8+ ♔h6 55 ♕h8+ 1-0

Mate follows: 55...♔g5 56 ♕h4+ ♔f5 57 ♕f4#.

Test 62

In Hedgehog positions it is not very common to sacrifice the c4-pawn for the initiative so early, but in this particular position this is the strongest plan. Plan **C** (30 points) is the correct choice. Plan **A** (10 points) gives White a slight plus due to his better pawn-structure and is only an inferior choice here because Plan C is so strong. Plan **B** (5 points) leads to a typical Hedgehog position, where White has a spatial advantage, but nothing more.

The game continued:

12 c5! dxc5

12...bxc5? 13 ♘c4 ♗c6 14 ♘bxd6+ ♗xd6 15 ♘xd6+ ♔e7 16 e5! +– is inadequate for Black, but maybe he should consider succumbing to an inferior endgame with 12...♘xc5 13 ♘c4 ♘fxe4 14 ♗xe4 ♘xe4 15 ♖xe4 ♗xe4 16 ♘cxd6+ ♗xd6 17 ♕xd6! (17 ♘xd6+? ♕xd6! 18 ♕xd6 ♖d8 19 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 ∓) 17...♕xd6 18 ♘xd6+ ♔e7 19 ♘xe4 ±. He would then have some chances to hold the draw.

13 ♘c4 e5

The alternative was 13...♗c6 14 ♘bd6+ ♗xd6 15 ♘xd6+ ♔e7 16 e5 ♘d5 (16...♘xe5 17 ♘f5+! exf5 18 ♗xc6 ♕d6 19 ♕xd6+ ♔xd6 20 ♗xa8 ♖xa8 21 ♗f4 is much better for White) 17 ♕g4! ♔f8 (17...♘xe5 18 ♘f5+! ♔d7 {18...exf5 19 ♕xg7 ♔e6 20 f4 f6 21 fxe5 fxe5 22 ♗g5 ♖f8 23 ♖ad1 +–} 19 ♕xg7 ♖g8 20 ♕xh7! ♘f6 21 ♖d1+ +–) 18 ♕h5 g6 19 ♗h6+ ♔g8 20 ♕e2 ±.

14 f4 ♗c6

Or 14...♗a6 15 ♕a4! ♗xb5 16 ♕xb5 a6 17 ♕c6 ♕c8 18 ♘xe5 ±.

15 ♘c3

White could also try 15 ♕a4!?; e.g., 15...a6?! (15...♗xb5 transposes to the previous note) 16 ♘bd6+ ♗xd6 17 ♕xc6 +–.

15...b5

Probably the best, as 15...♗e7 16 ♘d5 ♗d8 17 fxe5 ♘xe5 18 ♗f4 ♘fd7 19 ♕h5! +– is not acceptable for Black.

16 fxe5 bxc4

Also hopeless is 16...♘xe5 17 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 18 ♗f4 ♕d4+ 19 ♕xd4 cxd4 20 e5 ♗xg2 21 exf6+ ♔d7 22 ♘xb5 ♗b7 23 ♖ad1 +–.

17 exf6 *(D)*

B

17...♘e5?!

The final slip in a very difficult position. Black's only chance to fight was 17...♕e5!? 18 ♗f4 ♕d4+ 19 ♖e3! 0-0-0 (19...♕xd1+? 20 ♖xd1 0-0-0 21 ♗h3 ♖g8 22 ♘d5 +–) 20 ♕e2 ♘e5 (20...♕xf6? 21 ♕xc4 +–) 21 ♖d1 ♘d3 22 e5, with a clear plus for White.

18 ♘d5 ♕d6 19 ♗g5 g6 20 b3!

Opening more lines can only be to White's benefit.

20...cxb3 21 axb3 h6 22 ♗d2 ♕b8 23 ♖a6 c4

Or 23...♗d6 24 ♗f4 ♕b7 25 ♕a1 0-0 26 ♘e7+ +–.

24 bxc4 ♗c5+ 25 ♗e3 ♗xe3+ 26 ♖xe3 ♕b7 27 ♖b3! ♕d7 28 ♕d4!

Game over! The poor knight has nowhere to hide.

28...♘g4 29 h3 ♗xd5 30 exd5 0-0

Finally the black king has completed his duty, but the cost was high.

31 hxg4 ♖fe8 32 ♖a2 ♖e1+ 33 ♔h2 h5 34 g5 ♕f5 35 ♕f4 ♕c8 36 ♕f2 1-0

Test 63

Plan **A** (0 points) is totally pointless and White simply equalizes. Plan **B** (10 points) could be a serious option, as White's c-pawn is more of a weakness than a strength, but the presence of the excellent Plan **C** (30 points) makes the decision clear.

The game continued:

20...♘xb2! 21 ♖cxb2 ♗xb2 22 ♖xb2 ♖xc4 23 ♘e5?!

White should try 23 ♔e2 f6 24 h4 e5 25 g3 ♖dc8 26 ♖d2 ♖c2 27 h5 ♔f7, although his position would still be miserable.

23...♖c3 24 ♗d2 ♖c5 25 f4 ♖dc8 26 a3 ♖c2 27 ♖xc2 ♖xc2 *(D)*

W

This is the position Black aimed for when he played 20...♘xb2. Black's advantage is decisive.

Here we have an endgame, the phase of a chess game when a rook and just one pawn are often superior to two minor pieces, in contrast to a middlegame. There, the two minor pieces can prove really powerful, particularly if they can be employed in an attack against the king. Here Black has a rook and two pawns (not just one). Secondly, White has no counterplay, no passed pawns, and no objects to attack, while Black can attack the weak a3-pawn and simply create a passed pawn on the queenside – and one in the centre, if necessary. Therefore we can evaluate the position as won for Black; the active position of his rook and bad placement of the white king make Black's task easier.

28 ♗b4 f6! 29 ♘f3 ♔f7 30 ♘d4 ♖c4 31 ♘e2 a5 32 ♗d2

Or 32 ♗c3 ♖a4 33 ♗b2 b5 34 ♔f2 b4 35 axb4 axb4 −+.

32...♖c2 33 ♗c1

33 ♗e3 ♖a2 34 ♗xb6 ♖xa3 −+.

33...b5 34 ♔f2 b4 35 axb4 axb4 36 ♔e3 b3 37 ♔d3 ♖xc1! 38 ♘xc1 b2 39 ♔c2 bxc1♕+ 40 ♔xc1 ♔g6

The pawn ending is easily won. The end was:

41 ♔d2 ♔f5 42 ♔e3 ♔g4 43 ♔e4 h5 0-1

Test 64

Plan **C** (0 points) gives chances only to Black, as it even blocks the retreat of the white queen. Black has many ways to meet 31 f4?, such as 31...♖c1 32 ♔f2 (32 ♖xc1? ♖xc1+ 33 ♔f2 ♕b2+ 34 ♖e2 ♕d4+ 35 ♔g3 ♖c3+! 36 ♔xh4 ♕f6+ 37 ♕g5 ♕h8+) 32...♖xd1 33 ♗xd1 ♖c1 34 ♗e2 ♖h1 −+. Plan **B** (5 points) with 31 ♖ed3 is only slightly better for White: 31...♘f3+ 32 ♔g2 (32 ♖xf3 ♕xf3 33 d6 exd6 34 ♕xg6+ ♔h8 =) 32...♘e5 33 ♖e3 ♖c3 34 ♖d4 ♘c4 35 ♖xc4 ♖8xc4 36 ♗xc4 ♖xc4 37 ♖a3 ♖c8 38 ♕e3 ♕d6 39 ♖a5. Plan **A** (30 points) is best.

The game continued:

31 d6! exd6

There was no choice: 31...♖c1? 32 dxe7 ♖xd1+ 33 ♗xd1 +−.

32 ♖ed3 ♖e7

Other moves do not improve Black's lot: 32...♖d7 33 f4! ♖c5 34 f5! ♖e5 35 fxg6 ♘xg6 36 ♖f1 ♕g5 37 ♕xg5 ♖xg5 38 ♖d4 ± or 32...♖c6!? 33 ♕e3 b5 34 ♕g3 g5 35 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 36 ♕xd6 ±.

33 ♖xd6 ♖e1+ 34 ♖xe1 ♘f3+ 35 ♔f1 ♕xd6 36 ♖e6!!

In good positions small combinations often arise, quickly resolving matters.

36...♘d2+

No different is 36...fxe6 37 ♕xg6+ ♔f8 (37...♔h8 38 ♕h6+ ♔g8 39 ♗xe6+ +−) 38 ♕f6+ ♔e8 39 ♗a4+ ♖c6 40 ♕xf3 +−.

37 ♔e2 fxe6 38 ♕xg6+ ♔f8 39 ♕f6+ ♔e8

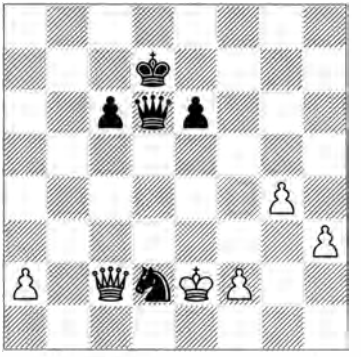
Or 39...♔g8 40 ♗xe6+ ♔h7 41 ♗f5+ +−.

40 ♗a4+ ♖c6 41 ♗xc6+ bxc6?!

Maybe Black had to try the endgame resulting from 41...♕xc6 42 ♕g6+ ♔e7 43 ♔xd2 ♕d5+ 44 ♔e3 ♕xa2 45 ♕g7+ ♔e8 46 ♕xb7 ♕a3+ 47 ♔f4 ♕xh3 48 ♔g5, but this would also be pretty hopeless. Still, it is better to fight with one pawn less than two, even if the result should be the same!

42 ♕g6+ ♔d7 43 ♕c2 *(D)*

B



This is the end of White's combination that started on move 36. He recovers his sacrificed piece and, with two extra pawns in a queen ending, he has no trouble cashing in. The end was:

43...♔e7 44 ♕xd2 ♕e5+ 45 ♔f3 c5 46 h4 ♕f6+ 47 ♔g3 ♕e5+ 48 ♕f4 ♕c3+ 49 ♕e3 ♕c2 50 h5 c4 51 h6 ♔f6 52 ♕d4+ e5 53 ♕d6+ ♔g5 54 h7 ♕c3+ 55 ♔g2 e4 56 ♕f8 1-0

Test 65

Plan **A** (20 points) cannot be bad, as it is rather typical for such positions. Still, although safe, it is slow. Plan **B** (5 points) gives White a chance to fight back with 26 e4!, although Black must still be somewhat better. But Plan **C** (30 points) is excellent and shows how the 'logical imagination' of a strong GM converts an unquestionable positional advantage into a full point on the scorecard. He does not 'sit on his hands',

waiting for the fruits to fall; instead he shakes the tree with great vigour!

The game continued:

25...♖ae7! 26 ♖a1 ♘f5

Now the threat of ...♘cxe3 becomes very real.

27 ♖a2 ♘cxe3!

There was no reason to prepare this sacrifice further. White's position falls apart.

28 fxe3 ♖xe3 29 ♖f2

There was no real alternative: 29 ♕d2 ♕h4 30 ♖aa1 ♘g3+ 31 ♔h2 ♘e2 32 ♘xe2 ♖xe2 33 ♕d1 ♖8e3 −+.

29...♕h4

Black wants to collect all the white pawns (d4 and b4).

30 ♕d2

And not 30 ♔g1?! ♖e1+ 31 ♕xe1 ♖xe1+ 32 ♖xe1 ♕xd4 −+.

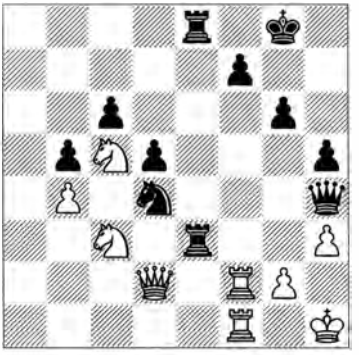
30...♘xd4

Black could also consider 30...♕xd4 31 ♕xd4 ♘xd4 32 ♖d2 ♘f5 33 ♔g1 h4 ∓.

31 ♖cf1? *(D)*

31 ♘d3? ♘b3 wasn't a real alternative, but White had to try 31 ♔g1! ♘f5 32 ♘e2 ♕f6 33 ♖d1 ♕e5 34 ♘f4 h4, when Black has the advantage but White can still put up a real fight.

B



31...♘f5! 32 ♖xf5?!

Making Black's task easier. More practical chances were to be found in 32 ♔g1 ♕xb4 33 ♘xd5 ♕xc5 34 ♘f6+ ♔g7 35 ♘xe8+ ♖xe8 or 32 ♖f4 ♘g3+ 33 ♔g1 ♕g5 34 ♖xf7 ♘xf1 35 ♖xf1 ♕g3 36 ♘d7 ♖8e6 37 ♖f8+ ♔g7 38 ♕d4+ ♔h6 39 ♖f1 ♖e1 40 ♕h8+ ♔g5 41 ♕d8+ ♖e7 42 ♖xe1 ♕xe1+ 43 ♔h2 h4, although White's position is objectively lost in either case.

32...gxf5 33 ♘d1

Or 33 ♘d3 ♕g3! 34 ♖d1 ♖xd3 35 ♕xd3 ♖e1+.

33...♖e1 34 ♔g1 ♖8e2 35 ♕c3 ♖xd1 0-1

Test 66

Plan **A** (0 points) is naïve and certainly only helps to improve Black's position. Plan **B** (5 points) is not that bad, though quite slow. Time is an important factor, and Black can use the respite to secure some safety for his king. Plan **C** (30 points) is just killing Black!

The game continued:

16 ♖a4! ♕e8?!

Black had to try 16...h5 17 ♖ad4 ♗c6 18 ♗g5 ♖c8 19 ♕f4 ♔g8 20 ♘e4 ±.

17 ♖g4 g6

Other moves are also inadequate: 17...♖g8 18 ♖xg7! ♖xg7 19 ♗h6 +− or 17...♗xf3 18 ♖xg7! ♗xd1 19 ♖g8+ ♖xg8 20 ♗h6+ ♖g7 21 ♕xg7#.

18 ♗h6+ ♔g8 19 ♘g5 ♗f8

This loses more quickly than 19...♖d8 20 ♖gd4 (or 20 ♖e1 ♘c5 21 ♖f4) 20...♘c5 21 ♖xd8 ♗xd8 22 b4 ♘d7 23 ♘ge4.

20 ♗xf8 ♔xf8

Or 20...♘xf8 21 ♖f4.

21 ♖gd4 ♗c6 22 ♖f4 f5

22...♘xe5 23 ♕e3 ♘d7 24 ♘xf7.

23 exf6 e5 *(D)*

W

24 ♕d3! 1-0

Black resigned due to 24...exf4 25 ♕d6+ ♔g8 26 f7+.

Test 67

Plan **A** (0 points) is too optimistic. Black can play 20...♘f6 and in case of 21 ♘c6? ♕e4+ 22 ♔g1 ♖f8 he is a healthy pawn up. Plan **C** (5 points) does not offer much after 22...♕e8, but

Plan **B** (30 points) is very much to the point and a typical textbook example.

The game continued:

18 ♘d4! ♘f6 19 b5!

It is important to strengthen control over the important c6 outpost.

19...♗xg2 20 ♔xg2 ♖d5 21 ♘c6 ♕d7 22 ♕c2!

If Black succeeded in exchanging the a-pawns and the queens, then he would be able to reduce White's advantage. 22 ♖xd5? ♕xd5+ 23 ♕f3 ♕xf3+ 24 ♔xf3 a6 would not be much for White.

22...♕b7 23 a4 h6 24 e4 ♖c5 25 ♕d3 ♖xc1 26 ♖xc1 a6 27 ♖c4!

Preparing ♖d4, which would paralyse Black. 27 ♖d1 ± is a reasonable alternative.

27...axb5 28 axb5 ♕c7

Maybe Black could try 28...♘d7 29 ♖d4 ♘c5 30 ♕d1 ♕c7, although after 31 e5 White would still hold the advantage.

29 ♖d4 *(D)*

B

29...e5?

In bad positions it is easy to come up with a blunder! Black had no choice but to wait passively with ...♕b7-c7 or ...♔h8-g8. White's plan then should be kingside activity with h4 and g4-g5. It is difficult to say if this should suffice for a win, but Black will have to suffer for a long time to come.

30 ♖c4 ♕d7?!

Losing a pawn, but 30...♔h8 31 ♕c3 ♖e8 32 ♖a4 ♕d6 33 ♕c2!, intending ♖a7, is also a nightmare for Black.

31 ♘xe5!

Of course! 31 ♕xd7? ♘xd7 32 ♘e7+ ♔h7 33 ♖c6 ♖a2 or 31 ♕c2? ♕d6 gives White nothing.

31...♕e6

The alternative was 31...♕xd3 32 ♘xd3 ♖a5 33 ♖b4 ♘e8 34 ♘e5 ♘c7 (34...♘d6 35 ♘c6 ♖xb5 36 e5!! ♖xb4 37 exd6 +–) 35 ♖c4! (35 ♘c4?! ♖xb5 36 ♖xb5 ♘xb5 37 ♘xb6 ±) 35...♖xb5 36 ♘xf7 +–.

32 ♘c6 ♖a2 33 e5 ♕d5+

Or 33...♘g4? 34 ♘e7+ ♕xe7 35 ♖c8+.

34 ♕xd5 ♘xd5 35 ♖d4 ♘c3 36 ♖d8+ ♔h7 37 ♖d7

White wins the f7-pawn and the rest is just a matter of technique.

37...♘xb5 38 ♖xf7 ♖c2 39 ♘b4 ♖e2 40 ♘d3 ♘a3 41 ♔f3 ♖c2 42 e6 ♖c8 43 ♔e4 ♖e8 44 ♔d5 b5 45 ♖b7 ♘c2 46 e7 ♔g6 47 ♔e6 1-0

Test 68

Plan **B** (0 points) has been tried in practice, but without any good results for Black. An example is 17 ♘a4! ♘xf3+ 18 ♕xf3 e5 19 ♘c3 ♘d4 20 ♕g3 ♕d8 21 ♗xd4 exd4 22 ♘e2 f5 23 ♘xd4 fxe4 24 ♘e2 ♗e5 25 ♕e3 ♕h4 26 ♗xe4 ♗f5 27 ♗d5+ ♔h8 28 ♕d2 ±. Maybe Black can improve his play somewhere, but he is still the clear underdog. Plan **C** (15 points) is typical for both sides. White can claim a slight advantage after 16 ♕d2. Far more interesting is Plan **A** (30 points).

The game continued:

13...♗xc3! 14 bxc3 f6!

The dark squares around the black king need to be covered. Not 14...♘c5?! 15 ♗h6 (15 ♗xc5!? dxc5 16 e5 b6 17 ♗e4 ♗b7 18 ♖ab1 ±) 15...♖d8 16 ♗g5 ±.

15 ♗c2 ♘c5 16 ♘h2 e5 17 ♗h6 ♖d8 18 ♘g4?

An important slip. White should transfer his knight to e3 via f1: 18 ♘f1! ♗e6 19 ♘e3 ♕f7 20 h4 ♘e7 ∞.

18...♕e7?

Black returns the favour. 18...♗xg4! 19 ♕xg4 ♘a5 20 ♕e2 ♕f7 21 ♗e3 (21 ♖d5 g5!) 21...♕xc4 22 ♕xc4+ ♘xc4 23 ♗xc5 dxc5 24 ♗b3 b5 leaves him with excellent chances.

19 ♘e3 ♗e6 20 ♘d5 ♕f7 21 ♗e3 ♖ac8 22 ♗xc5?!

22 ♖ab1! gives White the advantage.

22...dxc5 23 ♖ab1 ♘a5 24 ♖f1!? ♔g7 25 ♔h1

White could immediately play 25 f4 ♗xd5 26 exd5 exf4 27 ♖xf4 ±.

25...♖f8 26 ♗d3 ♗xd5 27 cxd5

27 exd5?! ♕c7 28 ♕e3 ♖ce8 ∞.

27...c4 28 ♗c2 b5?

A mistaken idea, as now White can invade via the a-file. 28...♕c7! ± should be preferred.

29 a4! ♕d7 30 axb5 axb5 31 ♕e3!

31 f4? ♘b7 32 fxe5 fxe5 33 ♕e3 ♖xf1+ 34 ♖xf1 ♖f8 is only equal.

31...♘b7 32 ♗d1 ♖c5 33 ♖a1 ♖c7 34 ♖a6 ♘d6 35 ♗g4 ♕e7 36 ♗e6 g5

Forced, as 36...♖b7 is met by 37 f4.

37 ♖fa1 ♖b8 38 h4! h6 39 ♖a7 b4 *(D)*

39...♖xa7 40 ♖xa7 ♖b7 41 ♖a8 b4 42 ♕e2! b3 43 ♖g8+ ♔h7 44 ♕h5 +–.

W

40 ♕c5?

Too optimistic. 40 cxb4 ♖xb4 41 hxg5 hxg5 42 ♖a8 would bring victory.

40...♖bb7 41 ♖xb7 ♘xb7 42 ♕xe7+ ♖xe7 43 cxb4 c3 44 b5?

Losing all of his remaining advantage, which could have been retained by 44 hxg5 hxg5 45 ♖c1 ♘d6 46 ♖xc3 ♘xe4 47 ♖c2 ±. Now it's a draw.

44...♘d6 45 b6 ♖b7 46 ♖c1 ♘xe4 47 f3 ♘g3+ 48 ♔h2 ♘e2 49 ♖c2 ♘d4 50 ♖xc3 ♘xe6 51 dxe6 ½-½

Test 69

Plan **A** (5 points) fails to focus on the merits of White's position. Exchanging pieces cannot be a good idea when there are no dividends to be extracted from it. Black is equal after 16...♘f6. Plan **C** (0 points) is worse still. After 14...0-0-0! 15 ♗e4 h5! 16 ♗xb7+ ♔xb7 17 gxh5 ♖xh5 18 ♖ab1 f5 Black even gets a plus. The early g-pawn advance only offers a target to Black for opening the h-file with a well-timed ...h5. So, Plan **B** (30 points) is best.

The game continued:

14 ♖f2 0-0

If Black went the other way (14...0-0-0), White would be slightly better with 15 a4 a5 16 e4.

15 g4

Now that Black has castled kingside, this move is possible. 15 e4 g4 16 ♘d2 ♕g5 17 ♖af1 ± is an alternative.

15...c5

An attack on White's g4-pawn is fruitless: 15...♘f6? 16 h3 h5 17 ♖af1 hxg4 18 ♘xg5 ♘h5 19 ♗h7+ ♔h8 20 ♖xf7! +–.

16 ♘d2 ♖ac8 17 ♖af1 d5?!

A bad move, assisting White's plans. He had to try 17...♔g7 18 ♘e4 cxd4 19 cxd4 d5 20 ♘d2 dxc4 21 ♗xc4 ± (and then avoid 21...b5?! 22 ♕b3!).

18 cxd5

18 ♗g6!? is also interesting: 18...f6! (not 18...fxg6? 19 ♕xg6+ ♕g7 20 ♕xe6+ ♔h8 21 ♖f7 ♖xf7 22 ♖xf7 ♘f8 23 ♕f5 +–) 19 cxd5 ♗xd5 20 ♗d3 cxd4 21 exd4 ±.

18...♗xd5 19 ♗e4

It is even stronger to insert 19 ♗h7+ first. Then 19...♔g7? loses to 20 ♖xf7+.

19...cxd4

Or 19...b5 20 ♕d3 a6 21 a4 ♖b8 22 axb5 axb5 23 ♗xd5 exd5 24 e4 ±.

20 exd4 b5 21 ♕d3 a6 22 a4

22 ♗xd5 exd5 23 ♖f5 ♕e6 24 ♕f3 ♖c7 25 ♖xd5 ♖xc3 26 ♖xg5+ hxg5 27 ♕xc3 ♕xg4 28 ♕e3 ± could also be considered by White.

22...bxa4

There was little choice: 22...♖b8? 23 axb5 axb5 24 ♗xd5 exd5 25 ♖f5 ♕e6 26 ♕f3 +–.

23 c4 ♗xe4 24 ♘xe4

White's advantage is beyond question. He threatens c5 and then ♘d6xf7. Black's a-pawns will eventually drop. Black needs some primitive action, but this is not easy to drum up. A line like 24...e5 25 d5 ♘c5 26 d6 ♕e6 27 ♘xc5 ♖xc5 28 ♖f6 ♕xc4 29 ♕h3! (29 ♖g6+? ♔h7! –+) leaves him helpless.

24...♕b4 *(D)*

An active try. The alternative was 24...f5 25 gxf5 exf5 26 ♘c3! (26 ♖xf5? ♖xf5 27 ♖xf5 ♖f8 28 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 ±) 26...f4 27 c5 ±.

25 ♕h3?

An over-optimistic idea. 25 c5! ♕b3 26 ♕xa6 ± is correct.

W

25...♕xc4!

Only this way! The passive 25...♔g7? 26 ♘f6 ♕e7 27 c5 ♘xf6 28 ♖xf6 ♕xf6 29 ♖xf6 ♔xf6 30 ♕xh6+ ♔e7 31 ♕xg5+ f6 32 ♕e3 is hopeless for Black.

26 ♕xh6

Black has excellent compensation after 26 ♘d6 ♕xd4 27 ♘xc8 ♖xc8 28 ♕xh6 ♕e3 ∞.

26...♕xd4 27 ♕xg5+ ♕g7?!

27...♔h8! is more precise: 28 ♕h4+ ♔g8 29 g5 (29 ♘g5 ♕h8 30 ♕g3 ♕d4 ∞) 29...♖c4 30 ♖e1 a3 ∞.

28 ♕e7! ♘e5?

A major error. Alternatives like 28...♖cd8? 29 ♖d2 +– or 28...♖c7? 29 ♘f6+ +– were not helpful either, but Black should have played 28...♕d4! 29 ♖e1 ♔g7 (29...♖c7 30 h3 ±) 30 ♕g5+ ♔h8 31 ♕h5+ ♔g8 32 g5, with only a slight advantage for White.

29 ♘f6+ ♔h8 30 ♕a3!

This is probably what Black missed. The white queen returns to the attack, and Black is helpless! It's true that when you focus on one flank, you can easily miss moves in other parts of the board. But of course, this cannot be a serious excuse!

30...♘xg4

30...♕h6 31 g5 ♕g6 (31...♕h4 32 ♖f4 +–) 32 ♕g3 +– or 30...♕g6 31 ♕a1 ♘d3 32 ♘d7+ ♕g7 33 ♖f3! +–.

31 ♕h3+ ♘h6 32 ♖f3

32 ♖f4! ♕g5 33 ♖h4 ♕c5+ 34 ♔h1 +– is more clear-cut.

32...♖c5

32...♕g5 is met most simply by 33 ♘e4! +–.

33 ♘d7

33 ♘g4! ♕g6 34 ♖f6 ♖h5 35 ♕c3 +– was another direct winning continuation. But White can finish off the game as he pleases.

33...♖f5 34 ♖xf5 exf5 35 ♘xf8 ♕d4+

35...♕xf8 36 ♖xf5 +–.

36 ♔h1 ♔g7 37 ♕a3 ♘g4 38 h3 ♘e3 39 ♕e7 ♕b6 40 ♘d7 1-0

Test 70

Plan **B** (0 points) helps White in no way, and costs him his advantage. By placing his knight on the c5-outpost, Black achieves at least equal chances. Plan **C** (5 points) fails to impress much, as Black can regroup his knight effectively (28...♘f6 and ...♘d5). Plan **A** (30 points) is correct, and very strong too!

The game continued:

25 g4! h6

Black could consider 25...g5!? 26 h4! gxh4 (26...h5!? 27 gxh5 gxh4 28 h6!) 27 g5 ♘h5 28 ♘g4 ♕g7 29 ♘h6+ ♔h8 30 ♕xh4 ± as an alternative.

26 h4 *(D)*

B

26...♕c5?!

Black should retain the queens on the board with 26...♖f8 27 h5 ♕b7 28 ♕d6 ♖e8 ±. He could then hope to benefit from the weakened white king some day. Anyway, in the endgame his survival chances are close to zero.

27 g5 hxg5 28 hxg5 ♕xd4 29 ♖xd4 ♘h5

The alternative was 29...♘e8 30 ♔g2 ♖c7 31 ♔g3 ♔f8 32 ♔g4 ♔e7 33 ♔h5 ♘d6 34 f4 ♘f5 35 ♖d3, when White has a simple plan: ♔g6-h7, g6, and a4-a5 +–.

30 ♔g2 ♔h7

Alternatives such as 30...♖f8 31 ♘g6 ♖e8 (31...e5 32 ♖e4 ♘f4+ 33 ♖xf4! +–) 32 ♔f3 e5 33 ♖e4 and ♔g4 +– and 30...♖c5 31 g6 ♖c8 32 ♖d7 ♖a8 33 ♔f3 ♘f6 34 ♖e7 +– are not really helpful.

31 f4?!

A slip. 31 ♔f3! is better: 31...♖c5 (31...♖f8+ 32 ♔g4 ♖f5 33 ♘d3 g6 34 ♖d7+ ♘g7 35 ♖xa7 +–) 32 ♔e4 b5 (32...♖a5 33 ♖d6! +–) 33 ♖d8! bxc4 (33...g6 34 ♖d7+ ♔g8 35 ♔d4) 34 g6+ ♔h6 35 f4 ♘f6+ 36 ♔e3 +–.

31...♖f8 32 ♔f3 ♖f5 33 ♘d3 *(D)*

B

33...g6?!

Black returns the favour. He should continue 33...e5!:

a) 34 ♔g4? exd4 35 ♔xf5 ♘g3+ and then:

a1) 36 ♔e6 ♔g6 37 ♘e5+ (37 ♔e5 ♘e2 38 ♔e4 ♔h5) 37...♔h5 38 ♔d5 ♘e2 (38...♘f5? 39 ♔e4 g6 40 ♔d3) 39 ♔e4 ♔h4 40 ♘c6 d3 41 ♔xd3 ♘xf4+ 42 ♔e4 ♔xg5 43 ♘xa7 ♘e2 =.

a2) 36 ♔e5 ♔g6 37 a4 (37 ♔xd4 ♔f5 or 37 c5 bxc5 38 ♘xc5 ♘e2 39 a4 a5!) 37...♘e2! (37...♘f5? 38 ♘b4) 38 c5 (38 a5 bxa5 39 c5 ♘c3 40 ♔xd4 ♘b5+ 41 ♔e5 a4 42 c6 a3 43 ♘b4 a5 44 ♘a2 ♘c7 =) 38...bxc5 39 ♘xc5 a5! 40 ♔e4 d3! =.

b) 34 ♘xe5 ♘xf4 35 ♔e4 ♖f8 (35...♘e2 36 g6+ ♔h6 37 ♖d7 ♘g3+ 38 ♔d5 ±) 36 ♖d7. White's advantage is obvious but Black has in any case improved his chances, as he is no longer dead lost.

34 ♖d7+ ♔g8 35 ♔g4!

35 ♖e7?? is naïve: 35...♘xf4! 36 ♘xf4 e5.

35...♖a5 36 ♘e5 ♖xa3 37 ♘xg6

White is winning. The black king has been caught in multiple mating-nets.

37...♘g7

Or 37...♘g3 38 ♖e7 ♘f5 39 ♖xe6 ♘e3+ 40 ♔h5 ♘xc4 41 ♘e7+ ♔f7 42 f5 +–.

38 ♖d8+ ♔f7 39 ♘e5+ ♔e7 40 ♘c6+ ♔f7 41 ♖d7+ ♔f8

41...♔g6 42 ♘e7+ ♔h7 (42...♔f7 43 ♘f5+) 43 f5 +– would not make a difference.

42 g6 ♘e8

42...♘f5 43 ♔g5 +–.

43 ♖f7+ 1-0

Black resigned in view of 43...♔g8 44 ♘e7+ ♔h8 45 ♖h7#. The final violent attack was particularly impressive. We do not see such attacks in endgames that often.

Test 71

Plan **A** (2 points) offers next to nothing. Black can even play 10...c4, with a good game. Plan **C** (15 points) is not that bad, although the position remains unclear, with chances for both sides. So, Plan **B** (30 points), while not a terribly strong one, forces Black to work hard in order to restrain White's advantage and is worth trying out.

The game continued:

8 e5!? dxe5 9 ♘xe5 ♗xg2 10 ♔xg2 ♘bd7

10...♘fd7?? loses on the spot to 11 ♕f3!. The main alternative is 10...♗d6!? 11 ♕f3 ♖a7 12 ♖e1 ±.

11 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 12 ♕f3 ♖c8 13 a4!

The first two of White's ideas have been accomplished.

13...♗e7?!

An inaccurate move, which only helps White to open and use the a-file. Black had to accept the slightly inferior position after 13...b4 14 ♘e4 ♘xe4 15 ♕xe4 (15 dxe4?! c4 =) 15...♕c6 16 ♕xc6+ ♖xc6 17 b3 h5 18 ♗b2 ♖h7 19 ♖ae1 g6 20 f4.

14 axb5 axb5 15 ♖a5!

Unpleasant problems start to appear for Black. In any case, now he is forced to play the undesirable ...b4.

15...b4 16 ♘e4!

16 ♘a4?! ♘d5! gives White little.

16...c4?

A second slip in only 16 moves can be too much. Black didn't like the position arising after 16...0-0 17 b3, when his pawns are fixed on his bishop's squares, but this was the lesser evil.

17 dxc4 ♕c7 18 ♘xf6+!

The optimistic 18 ♖a8? is wrong in view of 18...♕xc4! =.

18...♗xf6 19 ♖a4! ♕xc4 20 c3! ♖b8

The following forcing line was also possible: 20...♗e7 21 ♖a7 bxc3 22 ♕b7 ♕c6+ 23 ♕xc6+ ♖xc6 24 ♖a8+ ♗d8 25 ♖d1 ♔e7 26 bxc3 ♖xc3 27 ♗b2 ♖b3 28 ♖a7+ ♔e8 29 ♗xg7 ♖g8 30 ♖xd8+! ♔xd8 31 ♖a8+ +–.

21 ♖e1!

White's continuous threats are too much for Black! He is always short of a single tempo (...0-0) to reach a satisfactory position. Now White is threatening 22 ♖e4.

21...♗e7 22 ♖a7!

Black has surely been regretting his 13th move for some time now, but White insists on reminding him!

22...h6

Black's problems are difficult to solve. He could try 22...h5 (22...g5? 23 ♗xg5!) 23 ♗f4 ♖d8 24 ♗g5 (24 ♗e5 h4 25 ♗xg7 ♖h7 26 ♗f6 ♗xf6 27 ♕xf6 ♕c6+ 28 ♔g1 is also very good for White) 24..f6 25 ♕b7 ♕d5+ 26 ♕xd5 ♖xd5 27 ♖xe6 ♖d7 28 ♖a8+ ♖d8 29 ♖xd8+ ♔xd8 30 ♗e3 bxc3 31 bxc3, when he could put up some resistance in this objectively lost ending.

23 ♗f4 ♖d8 *(D)*

W

24 ♗e5!

As the g5-square has been covered, White uses another one, forcing a further weakening of the 7th rank. With ♕b7 to come sooner or later, White can expect to force capitulation shortly.

24...f6 25 ♗c7! ♖c8 26 ♕b7! 1-0

Black resigned in view of 26...0-0 27 ♗d6!. An impressive fact about this game was that Black never managed to find the time to castle.

Test 72

Plan **A** (30 points) is based on the correct evaluation of the position and is logical and good. Plan **B** (27 points) is also not that bad and can transpose to the main game. But Black should not play (after 22 ♖c1) 22...♖d3?! 23 ♖xc4 ♖a3? due to 24 ♖g4+ ♔h8 25 ♖h4, but just 22...♕d8 23 ♖xc4 ♕d6. Plan **C** (20 points) is an interesting one, but it is rather unnecessary. The approach of the white king to the centre in the rook ending is simple and sufficient.

The game continued:

22 ♖xc4 ♕d2

Black could try to keep the queens on the board, but then he would encounter problems with his king as well.

23 ♖c1

23 ♕e4?! ♖cd8!, threatening ...♕e2 and ...♖d1+, gives Black too much counterplay.

23...♕xc2 24 ♖1xc2 ♖c6!

Much better than 24...♔g7?! 25 ♖b2 ♖c6 26 ♖b7 with great pressure.

25 ♔g2?!

White would get nothing out of 25 ♖b2?! ♖b6!, but 25 ♖a4! ♖c7 26 ♔g2 f5 27 ♔f3 was the correct move-order. Now Black can activate his rook.

25...♖a6!

Black's rook has reached an active position.

26 a4

Probably the only move, as after 26 ♔f3?! ♖a3! White cannot make any further progress.

26...h6?!

No salvation is offered by 26...f5? 27 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 28 ♖xc5 ♖xa4 29 ♖xf5. A typical variation is 29...a5 30 ♔f3 ♖a1 31 h4 a4 32 ♖a5 a3 33 h5 h6 34 g4 ♔g7 35 e4 ♖a2 36 ♔e3 ♖a1 37 ♖a6 ♖a2 (37...a2 38 ♔f4) 38 e5 ♖a1 39 ♔f4 ♖f1 40 f3 ♖a1 41 ♔f5 a2 42 f4.

Black had to try 26...♔g7 27 ♔f3 ♔g6 28 ♔e2 (28 ♖g4+ ♖g5!) 28...f5 29 ♖d2! (there is nothing better) 29...♖ad6 (29...♖e5?! 30 ♖d8 and 29..♖xd2+?! 30 ♔xd2 are inferior) 30 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 31 ♖c2 ♔f6 32 ♖b2, with good winning chances for White, although the game is far from over.

27 ♔f3 ♔f8 28 ♔e2 ♖a5?!

This allows the c2-rook to get into action. Instead:

a) 28...♔e7?! is not very attractive either: 29 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 30 ♖xc5 ♖xa4 31 ♖h5! ♔f8 (31...♖a1 32 ♖xh6 a5 33 h4 a4 34 ♖h8 a3 35 ♖a8 +−) 32 ♖xh6 ♔g7 33 ♖h5 ♖a1 34 h4 a5 35 ♔f3 a4 36 ♖a5 a3 37 g4! (37 ♔f4? ♖a2 38 f3 ♖a1 39 h5 a2 40 g4 ♔h7 allows Black to resist) 37...♖h1 (37...a2 38 h5) 38 h5 ♖a1 39 ♖a6 +−.

b) A much better defence was 28...♖h5 29 h4 ♖d5 30 ♖2c3! (30 ♖b2? ♖b6 31 ♖b5! ♖xb5

32 axb5 ♔g7 33 ♔f3 ♖d6 34 ♖xc5 ♖b6 =) 30...♔g7 31 ♖d3 ♖xd3 32 ♔xd3 ±.

29 ♖b2!

White's rook becomes active, while Black's is forced into passivity. The difference can be seen in the final result.

29...♖d6 30 ♖b8+ ♔e7 31 ♖h4!

31 ♖c8? ♖da6 32 ♖c7+ ♔e6 is not what White was seeking!

31...♖b6

There was no difference with 31...♖c6 32 ♖e4+ ♖e6 33 ♖b7+ ♔d6 (33...♔f8 34 ♖h4 ♖c6 35 ♖xh6 ♔g7 36 ♖h4 c4 37 ♖b4 c3 38 ♖hc4 +–) 34 ♖f4 +–.

32 ♖c8 ♔d7 33 ♖h8 ♖b4 34 ♖4xh6 ♖b6

Or 34...♖axa4 35 ♖xf6 ♖b2+ 36 ♔f3 ♖aa2 37 ♔g2 ♔e7 38 ♖f4 +–.

35 ♖6h7 ♖xa4 36 ♖xf7+ ♔c6 37 ♖xf6+ ♔b5 38 ♖xb6+ axb6 *(D)*

W

39 h4!

Now White wins without much trouble. His pawn-mass on the kingside cannot be stopped and his king is closer to the enemy pawns.

39...♖a2+

39...♔c4 40 h5 b5 41 h6 ♖a6 42 g4 +–.

40 ♔f3 c4

40...♖a7 41 g4 ♖c7 42 ♔e2 c4 43 ♔d2 ♔b4 44 ♖b8 ♖d7+ 45 ♔c2 b5 46 h5 c3 47 h6 +–.

41 h5 ♖a7 42 ♖c8! ♖f7+ 43 ♔e2 ♔b4

43...♖g7 44 e4 ♖g5 45 h6 ♖h5 46 ♖h8 c3 47 g4 ♖h1 48 ♔d3 ♔b4 49 f4 ♔b3 50 ♖c8 +–.

44 g4 ♖h7 45 f4 ♔b5 1-0

Test 73

Plan **A** (30 points), which is standard for such structures, is correct. Plan **B** (0 points) is inadequate: 18...♕c7? 19 ♘c4 ♗f8 20 e5! dxe5 21 d6 ±. Plan **C** (15 points), although not that bad, is rather slow and gives White many options to keep the game unclear.

The game continued:

18...♘f4! 19 ♗xf4?!

Maybe White had to try the modest but acceptable 19 ♗f1 ♘d7 20 ♘c4 ♘e5 21 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 ∞.

19...gxf4 20 ♗d3 ♘d7

Now White has the better pawn-structure, but Black's two bishops and dark-square control are more significant.

21 ♕e2 ♘e5 22 ♘f3 ♔h8!

The g-file will also play an important part in the game.

23 ♔h1 ♖g8 24 ♖a3

An interesting idea, trying to get some extra protection for the h-pawn along the third rank.

24...♘xf3 25 ♕xf3 ♗e5 26 ♕h5

The 'passive' 26 ♘d1 ♕h4 27 ♗f1 ♗g4 28 ♕d3 ♗xd1 29 ♖xd1 ♕xf2 ∓ is no improvement.

26...♕f6

26...♕g5 27 ♕xg5 hxg5 28 f3 ♗d4 ∓ is also good.

27 ♗f1?!

I think White had to play 27 ♗e2 ♖g5 28 ♕f3 h5 ∓ for better or worse.

27...♖g5 28 ♕f3 h5 29 ♕d3

Or 29 ♔g1 ♗g4 30 hxg4 (30 ♕d3 c4 31 ♕xc4 ♗xh3 –+) 30...hxg4 31 ♕d3 ♖h5 –+.

29...c4 *(D)*

W

30 ♕d1

There was no real salvation for White, but he had to try 30 ♕xc4 (not 30 ♕f3? ♗g4! and Black wins). Then Black must find a precise path: 30...f3! 31 g3 (31 ♕c7 fxg2+ 32 ♗xg2 ♖xg2 {or 32...♕f4 –+} 33 ♔xg2 ♗xh3+ 34 ♔xh3 ♕f3+ 35 ♔h4 ♗f6#) 31...h4 32 ♕c7

hxg3 33 fxg3 (33 ♕xb8 g2+ 34 ♗xg2 fxg2+ 35 ♔g1 ♗h2+! 36 ♔xh2 g1♕+ 37 ♖xg1 ♕xf2+ 38 ♔h1 ♖xg1#) 33...♖xg3 34 ♕xb8 ♖g1+! 35 ♔xg1 f2+ 36 ♔g2 fxe1♘+! 37 ♔g1 ♗d4+ 38 ♔h2 ♕f2+ 39 ♗g2 ♕xg2#.

30...♗xh3! 31 gxh3

31 ♘b1 ♗g4 32 f3 ♗d7 −+.

31...f3! 32 ♘e2

There was no good answer to the threat of ...♕f4.

32...fxe2 33 ♕xe2 ♖bg8 34 ♗g2 ♕f4 35 ♖g3 h4! 0-1

Test 74

Plan **A** (5 points) gives away White's main advantage, his domination of the 7th rank, and allows Black to make an easy draw. Plan **B** (15 points) is not that bad, but Black can ease his defence by 26...gxh5. Plan **C** (30 points) is best.

The game continued:

26 h6! ♖d6 27 ♔f2 g5

27...♖ad8 28 ♖xa7 ♗b3 29 ♖d2 g5 30 ♖b2 ♗c4 31 ♔e3 ♖xh6 (31...♖xd4? 32 ♖b4!) 32 ♖c2 ♗d5 33 ♖c5 ♖e6 34 ♔d3 ♗xe4+ 35 fxe4 doesn't solve Black's problems either, but it was an option.

28 ♖dc1! ♗xe4

28...♔f8 is no better: 29 ♖1c5 ♗xe4 30 fxe4 ♖e8 31 ♖xg5 ♖xh6 (31...♖xe4? 32 ♖g8+ ♔xg8 33 ♖c8+ mates, or 31...♖xd4? 32 ♖g7 ♖e7 and again 33 ♖g8+ forces mate) 32 e5 ♖he6 33 ♔f3! ± (and not 33 ♖xa7?! ♖8e7 34 ♖a8+ ♖e8 35 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 =).

29 ♖c8+ ♖d8 30 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 31 fxe4 f5?

A serious mistake. Black's only chance lay in 31...♔f8! 32 ♔e3 ♖d6 33 d5 ♖xh6 34 ♖c8+ ♔e7 35 ♖c7+ ♔e8 36 ♔d4. White stands better, but Black can put up a decent fight.

32 ♔e3 fxe4 *(D)*

33 ♖c7!

The king's power in the endgame is well known. Therefore, it is most important that the enemy king is not allowed to join the battle.

33...♖d6 34 ♖g7+ ♔h8

34...♔f8 35 ♖xh7 ♔g8 36 ♖g7+ ♔f8 37 ♖xg5 ♖xh6 38 ♔xe4 +−.

35 ♖xg5 ♖xh6 36 d5!

36 ♔xe4? ♖g6! would ruin everything.

36...a5

Now 36...♖g6 is impossible due to 37 ♖xg6 hxg6 38 d6.

W

37 ♔xe4 a4 38 ♖g3 a3

There was nothing better. A nice variation that shows the weakness of the black king is 38...♖a6 39 ♖d3! a3 40 d6 ♖a4+ 41 ♔d5 ♖a5+ 42 ♔c6 ♖a6+ 43 ♔b7 a2 44 d7 a1♕ 45 d8♕+ ♔g7 46 ♕g5+ ♖g6 47 ♖d7+ ♔h8 48 ♖d8+ ♔g7 49 ♕e7+ ♔h6 50 ♕h4+ ♔g7 51 ♖d7+, with mate to follow.

39 ♖xa3 ♔g8

Or 39...♔g7 40 ♖xa7+ ♔f8 41 g4 ♖g6 42 ♔f5 ♖d6 43 ♔e5 ♖g6 44 ♖xh7 ♖xg4 45 ♔e6 ♖e4+ 46 ♔d7 ♖a4 47 ♖h8+ ♔f7 48 ♖c8 +−.

40 ♔d4 ♔f8 41 ♖e3!

Once more cutting off Black's king!

41...♖h2

There was no salvation: 41...♖g6 42 g3 ♔f7 43 ♔c5 ♖g8 44 ♔c6 +−.

42 ♖e2 ♖h1 43 d6 a5 44 ♔c5 ♖c1+ 45 ♔b6 ♖b1+ 46 ♔c7!

Certainly not 46 ♔xa5?? ♖d1 47 ♖e6 ♔f7 =.

46...♖c1+ 47 ♔d8 a4 48 ♖a2! 1-0

Black resigned due to 48...♖c4 49 d7 h5 50 ♖a3 h4 51 ♖f3+ ♔g7 52 ♔e7 ♖e4+ 53 ♔d6 ♖d4+ 54 ♔e6 ♖d2 55 ♖f7+ ♔g8 56 ♖f5 or 48...♖g1 49 d7 a3 50 ♖f2+ ♔g7 51 ♖c2.

Test 75

Plans **A** (5 points) and **B** (7 points) did not offer more than an equal position in most of the games where they were employed. Black always managed to handle White's threats and he actually achieved a plus-score. Plan **C** (30 points) is very logical and enables White to achieve a serious advantage.

The game continued:

18 ♖xe4! dxe4 19 ♘e5 ♕d5

Or 19...♕c7 20 ♗xe4 ♗b7 21 ♕f3 ♖bc8 22 a4 ±.

20 ♕e1!

Black's e4-pawn must be attacked immediately. It is also important that the queen protects the c3-bishop.

20...♗f5

An active try. 20...f5 21 f3! ± is again good for White.

21 g4!

White is playing with great accuracy. 21 f3? is inadequate: 21...♗xc5! 22 dxc5 ♕xc5+ 23 ♔h1 exf3 24 ♗xf3 ♖fe8 ∞.

21...♗g6

21...f6 22 ♘xc6 ♕xc6 23 gxf5 ± isn't attractive for Black either.

22 f3! b4

Now 22...♗xc5 isn't possible: 23 dxc5 ♕xc5+ 24 ♔h1 exf3 25 ♗xf3 ♖fe8 26 b4 ♕d6 27 ♕g3! +−. The same goes for 22...exf3 23 ♗xf3 ♕e6 24 ♘xc6 +−.

23 fxe4 ♕e6 24 ♗b2! *(D)*

White's centre would be destroyed after the greedy 24 ♗xb4? ♗f6.

B

24...♗f6?!

Black's only chance was to be found in the modest 24...♖fd8! ±.

25 ♘xc6!

Now White's passed pawns will run like a steamroller. White could go wrong here with 25 d5? ♕e7 26 d6 ♕e6 27 ♘xg6 ♗xb2 28 ♘xf8 ♗d4+ 29 ♔h1 ♔xf8 30 ♖c1 ♕e5 ∞.

25...♕xc6 26 e5 ♕a6 27 exf6 ♖fe8

Or 27...♕xf6 28 ♕f2! ♕xf2+ 29 ♔xf2 ♖bc8 30 ♖c1 +−. It is important for White to exchange queens (or major pieces in general), as then Black will not be able to create any counterplay against the white king, allowing the c- and d-pawns to finish the job.

28 ♕f1!

More accurate than 28 ♕g3?! ♕xf6 29 ♖f1 ♕a6 30 d5 ♕xa2 31 ♗d4 ±.

28...♕e2 29 ♕f2! ♕xg4 30 h3 ♕g5

Black tries his best: 30...♕h5 31 ♖e1! +− is hardly troublesome for White.

31 ♗c1

The obvious-looking 31 d5?! allows some counterplay after 31...♗e4!.

31...♕h5

31...♕xf6 32 ♕xf6 gxf6 33 ♗f4 is winning for White.

32 ♗f4 ♖bd8

32...♖bc8 33 ♗e5! wouldn't help Black either.

33 c6 ♗e4

Or 33...♖e2 34 c7 ♖c8 35 ♕f3 +−.

34 c7 ♖c8 35 ♖e1 ♕g6 *(D)*

Exchanging pieces would make things even easier for White: 35...♗xg2 36 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 37 ♕xg2 g6 38 ♕g4 +− and the pawns cannot be stopped.

W

36 ♖xe4!

A second exchange sacrifice on the same square! How often do we see that? Now the situation is clarified.

36...♖xe4 37 d5 ♖ce8 38 d6 ♖e1+ 39 ♔h2 ♕f5 40 ♕g3 g6 41 ♕g5!

White can also win by 41 ♕g4 ♕c5 42 d7 ♕g1+ 43 ♔g3 ♖8e3+ 44 ♔h4 +− (or 44 ♗xe3 ♖xe3+ 45 ♔f4 ♕f2+ 46 ♗f3 +−) but the text-move is the most accurate.

41...♕xg5

Or 41...♕d3 42 ♕h6!.

42 ♗xg5 ♖d1 43 ♗c6 ♖e2+ 44 ♔g3 1-0

White queens after 44...♖d3+ 45 ♔f4.

Evaluation Table

Test	Possible scores			Your Score
	A	B	C	1000+
1	20	18	10	
2	5	0	20	
3	5	10	20	
4	20	10	4	
5	0	20	0	
6	20	0	20	
7	5	10	20	
8	5	10	20	
9	3	8	20	
10	5	0	20	
11	20	7	13	
12	0	5	20	
13	10	20	5	
14	20	5	10	
15	0	10	20	
16	20	0	0	
17	20	5	10	
18	20	0	0	
19	20	15	5	
20	0	0	20	
21	5	0	20	
22	0	20	5	
23	20	0	13	
24	20	0	0	
25	0	20	7	
26	13	0	20	
27	13	5	20	
28	20	16	0	
29	13	20	5	
30	20	0	5	
31	20	13	13	
32	0	20	0	
33	0	3	20	
34	20	5	0	
35	0	10	20	
36	0	20	10	
37	0	5	20	
38	0	10	20	
39	20	0	0	
40	0	20	0	
41	0	0	20	
42	17	20	0	

Test	Possible scores			Your Score
	A	B	C	
43	0	5	20	
44	13	20	10	
45	3	20	3	
46	0	5	20	
47	5	20	5	
48	20	0	0	
49	8	20	0	
50	17	10	20	
51	20	30	27	
52	3	10	30	
53	30	5	0	
54	0	10	30	
55	0	10	30	
56	5	30	0	
57	30	0	10	
58	5	0	30	
59	0	5	30	
60	5	30	15	
61	0	30	20	
62	10	5	30	
63	0	10	30	
64	30	5	0	
65	20	5	30	
66	0	5	30	
67	0	30	5	
68	30	0	15	
69	5	30	0	
70	30	0	5	
71	2	30	15	
72	30	27	20	
73	30	0	15	
74	5	15	30	
75	5	7	30	
Your Total:				

Rating Results	Strength
2550 – 2750	Grandmaster
2400 – 2549	International Master
2250 – 2399	FIDE Master
2100 – 2249	National Master
1950 – 2099	Strong club player
1800 – 1949	Good club player
1650 – 1799	Average club player
1180 – 1649	Lower club or social player

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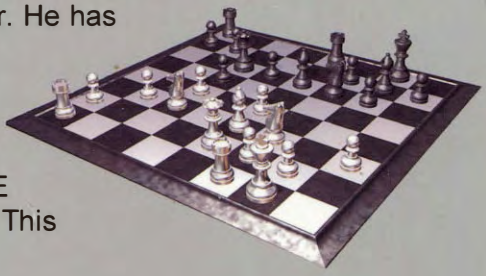

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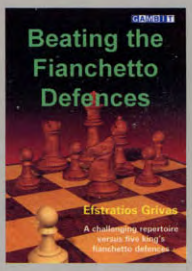

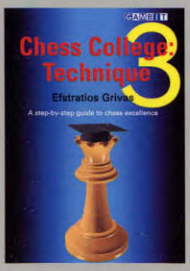

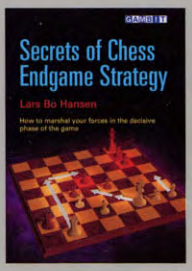

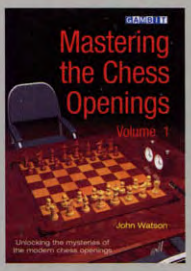

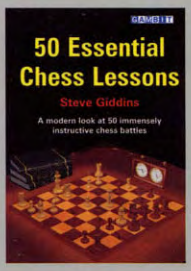

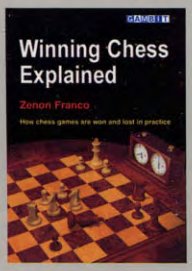

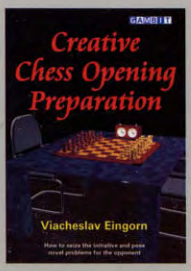

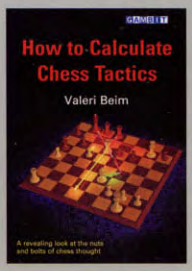

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